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# MEMOIRS OF . .
# GERALD O'CONNOR

# MEMOIRS

OF

# GERALD O'CONNOR

OF THE PRINCELY HOUSE OF
THE O'CONNORS OF OFFALY
IN THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND

DONE INTO MODERN ENGLISH BY HIS
KINSMAN


## WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS

COUNTY COURT JUDGE AND CHAIRMAN OF QUARTER
SESSIONS OF ROSCOMMON AND SLIGO, AND
SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF ORIEL
COLLEGE, OXFORD


*Hic saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani munere.*—VIRGIL.


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1903

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

MARIA LA TOUCHE

MY OLDEST FRIEND IN THIS WORLD

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# PREFACE

THIS volume describes the life and career of a distant kinsman of my own, a scion of the princely house of the O'Connors of Offaly, now the King's County in Ireland. Gerald O'Connor, according to family tradition, served with some distinction in the great Irish war of 1689-91, emigrated to France with Sarsfield and with part of the army that had defended Limerick in a memorable siege, and afterwards became attached to the staff of Marshal Villars. It is believed that he was an aide-de-camp of that great commander at Malplaquet and Dénain; but he appears to have been an officer of Tallard at Blenheim, of Villeroy at Ramillies, and of Vendôme at Oudenarde.

The records of the ancient Irish families which have had the fate of the O'Connors of Offaly are very meagre and imperfect. I do not pretend that this account of my kinsman's fortunes is, in all respects, accurate. But it has been compiled partly from old documents and papers in my possession, partly from reminiscences handed down from father



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to son during five generations, and partly from my own researches; these fully verify his statements, where they can be compared with them. A considerable part of the work, however, is my own. I have had recourse to the sources of history to bear out and to illustrate my kinsman's narrative, and I have described many of the memorable events in which he took part, and many of the striking scenes of which he was a witness, from authorities which have already been given to the public. Though I have thrown what I have written into the shape of Memoirs, and have told my tale as in the first person, I venture to express a hope that I have in these pages added something to our store of real historical knowledge. I think that there is no such account in the English language, from the point of view of an Irish exile in the service of France, of the Irish war, which contains the sieges of Derry and Limerick, and the battles of the Boyne and Aghrim, and of the great war of the Spanish Succession, with its grand drama of Blenheim and Ramillies, of Oudenarde, Malplaquet and Dénain. I believe, too, that the estimate of the military genius of Villars to be found in this volume is substantially correct; that illustrious chief has not been rated by English writers at his true worth.

I have described the effects of conquest and confiscation in Ireland and the settlement of the Irish land as they would be described by one of the O'Connors of Offaly, who lived from 1671 to 1748. But it must be understood that these views are not my own. I have no sympathy with agitators who seek to drive the Irish landed gentry from their hearths and their homes, after a possession of two centuries and a half, or with politicians who are trying to compass the same end by a circuitous process, and through legislation, immoral and pernicious alike.

WILLIAM O'CONNOR MORRIS.

GARTNAMONA, TULLAMORE,
*March* 13, 1903.

# Memoirs of Gerald O'Connor

## CHAPTER I

I BEGIN these records of a life of many chances and changes in the *maison de campagne*, where I have long been settled, near the outskirts of the ancient city of Rouen. My garden slopes down to the banks of the Seine, as it flows gently through its Norman meadows. My wife, her dark eyes still lit up with love, though age has shed its snows on her head, is at her tambour work by my side; our grandchildren, their parents all far from home, are romping among my shrubs and *parterres*. The scene and its surroundings befit the retreat of an old soldier who, after the storms of years and experiences gathered in many lands, has found at last a haven of repose, thanks to the favour and friendship of an illustrious chief. Save for an occasional visit to the Invalides, where I find some veteran companions-in-arms, I have not left my present abode for a long time. For more than half a century since I marched out of Limerick with Sarsfield at the head of its heroic garrison, France has been the land of my choice and affection; I rejoice to think that with my comrades of the Brigade I have done her good and devoted service. Our efforts in the field were not often successful. I beheld Blenheim, Ramillies and Oudenarde, but I commanded a squadron at Neerwinden, and

stood by the side of Villars at Malplaquet and Denain; and my soul has lately been gladdened by the news that Lord Clare's men, after a desperate struggle, put our foes of ages at Fontenoy to the rout and shame. But though I have long been a soldier of France, and my descendants are and will be French men and women, Ireland is the country of my birth and of my first youth. I often think with sorrow that it will not be my lot to pray again in an Irish church or to lie in an Irish grave. Ireland still lives, and will always live, in my memory; my apprenticeship in arms was made in her cause; I fought for her at Derry, Limerick, the Boyne and Aghrim; and I have kinsfolk in the dear land, who still retain a fragment of the immense possessions their forefathers ruled, and at whose hospitable hearth I have been a welcome guest.

I was born in 1671, twenty years after Ireland had been crushed by the accursed hands of Cromwell. The place of my birth is still before my aged eyes; it was a low thatched house, beside the wreck of one of the many castles held by my kindred, chief of one of the great tribes of O'Connor, in the ancient land of Offaly, now called the King's County by its heretic Saxon despoilers. Offaly and Leix, the neighbouring land of the O'Moores, girt on the south by the swelling range of the Slieve Blooms, on the north by the line of the waters of Westmeath, and to the east by vast spaces of morass and forest, had for centuries kept back the advance of the Englishry; on its western borders it reached the course of the Shannon, and touched the lands of the O'Connors of another stock, the heirs of the last of the Milesian kings of Ireland. My fathers were lords of this far-spreading domain; their sons and daughters married into the great Norman houses, notably into those of Kildare and Ormond; the heads of a number of inferior

chiefs, they held high state in their fortified dwellings, built after the stately Norman fashion. They founded and endowed religious houses, homes of holy men and women, long ago sunk in ruin. From their fortresses in Offaly they often overran the dwindling English Pale, with the fierce swarms of their assembled clansmen. More than once, helped by their Geraldine kinsmen, they carried their forays to the walls of Dublin, and exacted the Black Rent from the affrighted townsmen. Their Norman blood, however, was fatal to them: they took part in the rising of the heroic Silken Thomas, were marked down for vengeance by the adulterous Tudor; Leonard Grey and Bellingham, aided, alas! by traitors of the race, made gradually their way into the wilds of Offaly, and, after cruel deeds of havoc and blood, this region and Leix were named English shireland, and peopled by a brood of alien Saxon settlers. The O'Connors, nevertheless, fought stubbornly for the possessions of which they had been robbed, and though hundreds of their tribe and of the O'Moores were wickedly lured into a murderous ambush, and massacred by the pitiless Sidney, they proved, whenever a chance offered, a sharp thorn in the side of their English oppressors. They flung themselves into the great Desmond war, marching from Offaly into the far lands of Kerry; they fell on Essex in his advance into Munster, and the Pass of Plumes was stewn with the gay bravery of his slain men at arms; they slaughtered their enemies with such effect at Tyrrells Pass, when the great Hugh O'Neill summoned all the Gael to rise, that scarcely one of Barnewell's soldiery escaped from the field. I shall glance afterwards at the deeds and the fate of my ancestors, as these live in tradition and the tales of the old; for the present I notice their more recent fortunes. One of the chiefs took his

sword to the Court of Philip II., and served in the great Armada with honour; two were still acknowledged to be of the rank of princes until Ireland had fallen under the hand of Mountjoy. From this unhappy time the family declined rapidly, at least in Offaly. Their bravest spirits were found in the armies of France and of Spain. Unlike the head of the ruined tribe of the O'Moores, they were little known in the great rising of 1641. They were even described as "innocent Papists" by Cromwell's Courts of Claims, and allowed to vegetate in a nook of their ancient possessions, though my grandfather had crossed swords with Ireton, when, the savage lion throwing his prey to the jackal, Ireton, after Drogheda and Wexford, advanced to Limerick.

The castle, of which the ruins overlooked my birthplace, was one of the smallest of the O'Connor castles, very different from their great strongholds of Monasteroris and Dangen, that guarded the approaches from the Pale of the Englishry. It had been built at the edge of a small but deep lake, which covered it upon its southern front, and shielded it from attack before the age of firearms; a wide fosse that let in the lake's waters, and rude walls were the defences of the other fronts. But the donjon, and indeed the whole place, were commanded at an easy distance by an adjoining hill, and were at the mercy of even the weakest cannon; they fell when assailed by the soldiers of Coote in the hurly-burly of the great war that began in 1641. The garrison, a mere handful of half-armed peasants, made a desperate resistance at the opened breaches, and perished to a man, after two furious assaults; an engineer of Vauban would have declared a defence impossible, but I have beheld what was done at Derry and Limerick. Our house was formed out of the remains of the castle—Coote in his anger

razed this to the ground. It was, I have said, a poor and mean dwelling, but with a few hundred acres still left to them, this was now the only domain of the heirs of the Offaly princes, once lords of a territory that spread from the Boyne to the Shannon. The spot was known in the Gaelic tongue as the "garden in the bog"; the scenery around it—I shall never forget it—was not without the grandeur and beauties of nature. The Slieve Blooms, their long line swelling into broad, lofty uplands, rose out of morasses in the far distance; all around stretched a region of undulating hills, divided at wide intervals by swampy plains and flats, where the eye caught the remains of the primeval woodlands, for ages a fence against the invading Saxon; far away you could see, on a fine clear day, the dim forms of the mountains of Wicklow and Dublin looming out of the mists of the great tract of bog near the Liffey. The prospect, like the fortunes of a conquered race, had a look of melancholy and sadness in its broadest features, but it had a charm of its own in many places, and when the landscape was lit up by the summer sun it was rich with the softness and loveliness we find in Ireland alone.

A wayfarer, however, through Offaly and Leix, in those days, would have beheld everywhere the ravages of war in the land and the marks of devastation following in its train. The ruins of abbeys and castles were not so often seen as in the lost lordships of the fallen house of Desmond; but every abbey and castle was simply a ruin. The holy ground, for ages the place of burial of chiefs, prelates and saints, from which the Seven Churches of Clonmacnoise rose, beside the dark stream of the lonely Shannon, had been desecrated by an English garrison from Athlone; the shrines had been rifled, even the graves broken open; the Christian temples, to which

pilgrims from many lands had flocked, in bygone centuries, to offer worship and prayer, had become an unsightly and desolate wreck. So it was with the noble Abbey of Killeigh, founded by the O'Connors for the monks of St Francis; the cloisters had disappeared, the nave and aisles were roofless; the nunnery had vanished with its pious sisterhood. As for the castles of my fathers, they had either been overthrown or armed forts were being built amidst their ruins; this was the fate, too, of the castles of their dependent chiefs; they had been blotted out, or nearly so, by the storms of incessant strife, as we hear of towns in the plantations of the Indies destroyed by the hurricane. Two strongholds, made by Bellingham more than a century before, at Portleix and Dangen, to bridle the adjoining country —Maryborough and Philipstown are the Saxon names—were, indeed, almost the only structures of real size to be seen for leagues over the face of this region; and these were only the fortified buildings of English garrisons. Successive bands of settlers had been sent into Offaly and Leix, since they had been overrun by the soldiery of Mary Tudor, and a brood of fresh colonists had been planted in the soil, after Cromwell had effected his huge work of rapine. But the O'Connors, the O'Moores and their leaders in the field had given too much trouble to the first race of spoilers to allow them to have a lasting hold on the land; and the Cromwellian intruders were, as it were, of yesterday. The habitations of these men were squalid and mean, and, whatever has been said as to the "civilisation" they brought with them, their still precarious possessions were usually breadths of unfenced pasturage that gave little or no proof of good and fruitful husbandry. The churches too, from which they had driven our priests—these had perished in scores in defending their altars—were

generally falling into wretched decay; indeed, they were shunned as places of evil and sin, by the impious men of Cromwell. English writers, such as Petty, and many others, have left nothing undone, during a series of years, in defaming the "savagery" of Ireland under her own princes. I am sure the Offaly my fathers ruled was a more smiling and prosperous land than the Offaly that met the sight of my boyhood.

The state of the population that lived in this desolate land had also a sinister aspect that portended evil. The barbarities of the days of Cromwell were things of the past; our holy priesthood was not banned and proscribed, and could do its offices in obscure secrecy; the "Papists," who still held bits of their old possessions, were left to exist in peace; the banishments and rapine of a terrible time had ceased; the cry to "Hell or to Connaught" was no longer heard. Ireland was at comparative rest under the rule of Ormond—hardly a worthy scion of a great stock, a time server, and a courtier of the false Stuarts, yet not without a kindly feeling for the land of his birth; but this tranquillity was on the surface of things only. The races of the conquerors and the conquered dwelt together; but they were enemies at heart, and had nothing in common, for the Cromwellian settlers the Irishry, in their midst, were Amalekites under the yoke of the men of Israel; the other settlers of the Englishry were very little better; the Irishry and the few of their fallen leaders brooded over their wrongs in silence, and, distant as it might be, looked forward to an hour of revenge. Society was disordered in its every part, all that composed it was at discord, shattered, diseased; signs of real improvement were not to be found. Offaly had been made English shireland for more than a century; it had, I have

said, been twice overrun by Saxon colonists; English law and government had followed the march of conquest; the usages of the ancient people, as they appeared in their ordered tribes, clans and septs, especially in all that related to the land, had been declared barbarian, and rudely blotted out. But the settlement had not struck root and shown a healthy growth; it remained an alien, detested and malign influence. The heretic clergy prayed in half-empty churches; they wrung the tithes of the true Church from the Catholic tillers of the soil; but they had no power over the hearts or the souls of the Saxon colonists. There were what were called English Courts of Justice, sheriffs, magistrates, English police and jurymen, but these were the mere abettors of odious foreign rule; the people knew them not, or knew them as oppressors only. The so-named Saxon lords of the soil were a worthless and domineering order of men, severe even to the few tenants of their own breed and faith, and mere tyrants of the tenants of the conquered race; spite of the hypocritical cant commonly found in their mouths, they were often wasteful and given to evil vices; they squandered what they had too easily won. As for the Irishry, the old and real people of this region, their lot was woeful, miserable, hard. Their chiefs and leaders, their domains rudely torn from them, had for the most part sought an asylum in foreign lands; their dependents were left at the mercy of strange and unfeeling masters. A violent revolution had passed over the land, had ruthlessly transformed what had pertained to it, had destroyed all that was best in the life and the customs of the subjugated race. It was not only that the sword and the spoiler had done their work, and had placed a Saxon caste in the ownership of the soil. The ancient tribal system, under which the land had been held, had been broken

up; the time-honoured rights of the clansmen and sept men had been shamefully set at naught. The Ceile of substance, the Saerstock and Daerstock tenants, who had possessed their holdings for ages, at the easiest rents, had been suddenly degraded to the condition of Fuidhir serfs; they had become the mere tenants at will of alien Saxon landlords. The foulest wrong had been done wholesale; its results were occasionally seen in the wild justice of revenge inflicted on the oppressor when more than usually severe, as the vanquished Saxon children of the soil, in a far bygone time, often slew, I have read, their fierce Norman tyrants.

The O'Connors had fallen from their princely estate, yet the reverence of ages still gathered around them; in Offaly, as a legend of my boyhood ran, "Fortune had taken their honours, but had left them kings." The few remaining scions of their dependent chiefs often resorted to our humble abode to offer homage and kindly greetings; indeed, a Cromwellian Justice of the Peace more than once reported that "Papists who came together in this way" could not be, in Cromwellian phrase, "innocent." For miles around, the old clansmen and their sons, poor as they were, used to bring us gifts of honey, butter and milk, and now and then cattle and sheep by stealth, to prove their devotion to the family they still clung to; more than one was eager to pay the ancient "fair rents"; they treated with scorn the titles of the usurping stranger. The harpers of our tribe had been hunted down and their craft proscribed, but the sweet melody of their clairseachs was often heard in our dwelling, indeed it has been more than welcomed in far-distant lands, a reproach to the brutal and coarse-minded Saxon. So it was with our Brehons—venerable and learned. They had left the places of refuge in which they

had lain hid, to escape banishment and even a cruel death; and some with those who had been heirs of their lore, were wont, even in that evil time, to explain the customs of their race, and to pronounce their decrees to suitors, who willingly obeyed their behests. As for our priests, I have said they were left alone; and all of the true faith in Offaly flocked to their altars, in huts among solitary hills and bogs, and joined in the sacred Catholic rites. Offaly, in a word, remained Irish under Saxon misrule on the surface; what was old was not replaced by the new; this was made matter of repeated complaints to Ormond; but, to do him justice, he took no notice. He had been restored to most of the lands his fathers had held, and had been gorged with spoil by means of the atrocious law which gave its sanction to the rapine of Cromwell; but he had no wish to do further wrong to the Irishry and their ancient leaders.

My grandfather Gerald—he was so named from his forefather the great Earl of Kildare—was the head of our family in my first boyhood. He had long passed the age of fourscore, but his eye was not dim and his frame was not bent; he had still the lofty bearing and stature of the Offaly chiefs. His father Maurice—another Geraldine name—was the last of the race which kept the rank of princes; he had taken a foremost part in the fearful Desmond war, and had stood by Hugh O'Neill on the great day of the Yellow Ford. My grandfather used to tell us what he had heard of that memorable fight: how the great Hugh had made his kerne equal in arms to the Englishry; how he had forced Bagenal to advance to the Callan along a narrow road with morasses on either side; how he had made this scarcely passable by sinking deep holes in it, and drawing across it hundreds of felled trees; how he covered his camp by a strong breastwork; and how,

as the Englishry pressed on, scattered, blown and disordered, along the difficult way, he charged them in front and hurled them back in rout, while his light footmen, falling on both their flanks, slaughtered them flying, like hunted sheep, to Armagh. This was a grand exploit, and I have seen great pitched battles; it proves that Hugh O'Neill was one of the first soldiers of his time—peace to his soul! the heroic exile sleeps far away in Spain, the mightiest of the royal Hyniall line.

My grandfather first saw fighting at the siege of the Castle of Geashill, held by a kinswoman of his own of the house of Kildare; he often told us how he admired the noble lady's courage as she bade defiance to the Irishry under the Lord of Glenmalier. He was long a companion in arms of Owen Roe O'Neill, and won honour in that great chief's service; but he did not see Drogheda or Wexford, and he never laid eyes on the murderer Cromwell. He directed the defence of our last castle against Coote, and, as I have said, he encountered Ireton on his march to Athlone; issuing from an ambush with a few armed clansmen, he made scores of the Englishry bite the dust. He was at the right hand of Owen Roe on the glorious field of Benburb; his aged cheek flushed with pride as he described how his skilful chief, after long holding a superior force at bay, seized his chance, and at the head of his horsemen drove the Scots of Munroe into the Blackwater's depths.

The name of my father was John Fitzmaurice, given him in memory of John and Fitzmaurice of Desmond, leaders in the great Desmond war, in which the O'Connors took part. He was born about 1640, was too young to bear arms in the great rising of 1641-50; this was perhaps the reason that, owing to a mistake made by the Court of Claims, the heir

of the race was thought to be its head, and the family were adjudged to be "innocent Papists." My father went to the Commission held at the King's Inns in Dublin to save what remained of our lands from forfeiture, when the Act of Settlement, as it was called, was made law; he saw there a good-looking and calm-faced boy, sitting under the bench on which his father, one of the Commissioners, sate; this was John Churchill, afterwards the renowned Marlborough; he was a great captain, but he met his match in my glorious chief, Villars. My father left Offaly to serve in the armies of the mighty Louis XIV.—there was no Irish Brigade in those days. He became a musketeer in the regiment of Navarre, and was raised to the grade of officer before he had reached his thirtieth year. He made several campaigns under the illustrious Turenne, and used to tell us much about the great Marshal; he commanded a company in the famous march behind the Vosges, and in the defeats of the astounded great Elector's hordes; he shed tears over the dead body of Turenne, fallen, just as Montecuculli was in his grasp on the Sassbach. But what my father was wont to dwell on most in the career of the Marshal, was the battle of Entzheim. English soldiers were then in the armies of the great king; John Churchill, known as the "handsome Englishman," was already distinguished on the staff of Turenne. The key of the position was a little wood on Bournonville's left flank; Churchill seized and held this with astonishing skill and daring; he was thanked by his chief in the presence of the whole French army. My father fought in the struggle for the possession of the wood. "Churchill," he often said, "has in him the stuff of a great general; it will be a bad day for the king should he ever be in the field against him." What he foretold has proved to be only too true; but, oh!

that we had had Turenne to oppose Marlborough; France would never have mourned for Blenheim and Ramillies.

The women of our family were worthy of the high estate held by the princesses of the heads of our tribe. My grandmother Fiona was a daughter of the Malowen O'Connors, so called from bald Owen, one of the race; she retained traces of beauty in extreme old age; a diamond cross she sometimes wore on her breast was given to her father by the great Hugh O'Neill. My mother was Nesta Fitzgerald, of the noble house of Kildare; her kindred had been brought up at the Court of the heretic queen, and for many years had become English; but she wedded my father, low as our fortunes were; she was not unmindful of what the chiefs of Offaly had been. I had an elder brother, Maurice, of whom I shall say much afterwards; from his first boyhood he was studious and eager to learn; my two sisters were Cauthleen and Mary, the last bearing the name of Mary Fitzgerald, a sister of the murdered Silken Thomas, and the wife of Brian O'Connor, the chief of our race; she was the saviour of the infant Earl of Kildare, when he was hunted down by the bloodhounds of Henry Tudor, and carried him out of the Pale into the wilds of Offaly. My sisters grew up to be fine and pious women; they devoted themselves to helping the poor descendants of our broken clansmen; I still see them in their white woollen robes, richly jewelled, and sweeping along the ground, the garb of the maidens of the Offaly princes. A son of one of the settlers of the Cromwellian Englishry sought Mary's hand. "Do you imagine," was her indignant reply, "that an O'Connor would mate with the offspring of an heretic Saxon trader?" Besides the kindred of our blood I had

foster brothers and sisters; they were reared up among us, and looked upon as part of the family; despite English laws and punishments, we clung to the ties of the past; one of my foster brothers fell by my side at Limerick, one of my foster sisters was married to a brave French soldier.

A foster sister of my grandmother's was an aged crone who, when I first knew her, had passed her ninetieth year. She was a daughter of a dependent in one of our households, and still had a clear recollection of much that she had heard from her parents. She used to show me two huge stones, on either shore of our lake; these were what the Pagan giants flung at each other when fighting; while affrighted fairies looked on from their rings in the woods. She often showed me the pass where Mary O'Connor carried her half-brother, the young Earl of Kildare, in a basket, and hid him in a hut beside one of our castles; she was fond of telling how he had been borne from Thomond into far-distant Kerry, and sheltered by Eleanor Fitzgerald, cousin of Mary, and widow of the Red M'Carthy; how Eleanor had wedded a chief of the tribe of Tirconnell, in the hope of saving her kinsman from the Tudor hangman; and how the boy was conveyed into Italy and France, and was at last restored to his lands and his honours. "And yet he was a poor creature," she would say; "he had no thought of what had been done for him, and no care of his Irish kindred; he married a heretic, and was welcome at Elizabeth's Court; he knew that Margaret, one of Mary O'Connor's daughters, had flung herself at the feet of Mary Tudor at Greenwich, and had implored the queen to pardon her father Brian, a captive for years; he had heard of the pitiless reply, 'He may have his life, but shall never have his lands;' and yet he did nothing on

behalf of his saviour's husband." I hung on her lips as she was wont to tell how, when the Saxon made his way into Offaly, awful sights of terror appeared in the skies; how at night a bloody sword, large as a rainbow, blazed over the land; how hundreds of fiery shapes were seen on the hills; how the banshee's lament wailed round the dwellings of our chiefs. "Offaly is now in the hands of a stranger," she would exclaim; "but Brian O'Connor sleeps, in armour, beneath that lake's waters; at the bidding of the Great Paystha, when the time comes he will rise and the heretic spoilers will fly."

My friend and companion, however, in those days was Nicholas Butler, a priest well stricken in years, one of the saintly Jesuit fathers, the best and most devoted champions of our faith. He belonged to the great Norman house of Ormond, but he had left Ireland when a boy, and had been brought up at Rome. He had gone on a mission in Germany at the close of the long war, in which the Lutheran heretics were well-nigh subdued. He had been in the closet of Richelieu before our rising in 1641, had been welcomed at Multifarnham in the ruined abbey, where the driving out of the aliens from our lands had been arranged. He had stood by Rinuccini, at the great assembly held in Kilkenny, where the confederates of our race tried to compel Charles Stuart to give Irishmen back the rights they had lost. He had seen Heber Macmahon, the heroic prelate, fall when deserted and betrayed. He preached a holy war against the murdering soldiery of Ireton and Coote. He had fled from Ireland while the land was under the curse of Cromwell; had made the glories of the Church and its blessings known to heathens along the Ganges and beyond the ocean of the West, and had returned to his own

people, under the rule of Ormond, and became a director and a teacher in our house. I learned from him all that I have ever learnt in books; but I learned more from his example and the training he gave me. We often made our way to Clonmacnoise together; and I bear in mind, as though it were yesterday, how, as we stood in the ruins of Killeigh, he made out the half-effaced words on the tomb of one of the Offaly princes—

> "Hic jacet heroum claro de stemmate natus,
> Donatus, patriæ cura, dolorque suæ,"

and how he bade me swear, as we looked at the broken altars of our faith, that I would do what in me lay to restore them. He sometimes took me on journeys beyond Offaly, through the lands wasted by the frightful strife of ages, where the shattered castles and abbeys of the Desmonds rose, despoiled or neglected by the new heretic settlers; and he was fond of pointing out, as we entered the noble Church of St Canice, turned into a stable by Cromwell's troopers for a time, how the graves of the retainers of the Butlers still bore their names, though few remained in the lordships of the great race of Ormond. His converse sank deep into my youthful mind and filled it with thoughts I have never forgotten. He did not know much about our family, for the Slieve Blooms cut Offaly off from the land of the Butlers, but he had tales of the power of the O'Connors in bygone days, and of the honour in which they were held by their Norman kinsmen. He used to tell me much about the "Great Countess," the noblest woman of the Geraldine name, whose degenerate husband, Pierce Butler, yielded up the Ormond earldom to an upstart Boleyn to do pleasure to the lustful Tudor. He often dwelt on the deeds of "Gerald the Great," the most illustrious hero of

his race, who ruled Ireland for more than thirty years, was dreaded and loved by the Englishry and the Irishry alike, yet whose race was struck down by the English tyrant "for, observe," he would say, "the Saxon always breaks and casts away the instruments of which he makes use in Ireland." But he would chiefly dwell on the glories of Erin in far-distant centuries, when the land was the ark of the faith, amidst the great flood that swept Rome away; when her holy men preached to the heathens on the Rhine and the Elbe; when, flying from the wrecks of a dying world, kings and princes found a home in the crypts of Armagh and Clonmacnoise.

Father Nicholas had read much and had travelled in many lands; he was not unknown at the Courts of kings and in the councils of statesmen; he had made the affairs of Ireland, at this time, matter of earnest study. He would sometimes open to me, though still a boy, his mind, and tell me what he thought of the state of our country. "The curse of Ireland," he would remark—I put together what he often said—"is that she has always been divided against herself; her children have not united to throw off the yoke of the stranger. This has not been owing, as Saxon chroniclers have said, to the inborn infirmities and faults of the race; it has been the result of many causes I do not care to dwell on. But even the Geraldine name could not bring together the Irish tribes in the war Silken Thomas waged; the treachery of the O'Donnells lured Shane O'Neill to his death; the great Hugh himself could not make the clans of Munster join him, and was defeated at Kinsale by a feud in his camp. The confederates did better forty years ago; but Preston and Owen Roe were never friends. The Catholic Englishry of the Pale and the Catholic Irishry distrusted each other, and Ireland was crushed under the feet of

Cromwell. In old times even the Church in Ireland was at odds with itself; the Church of the Normans stood apart from the Church of the native race, though both were loyal to the supreme Roman pontiff. All this, however, has now been changed; the sons of the lords of the Pale and of the Irish princes have equally had their lands torn from them and have sunk in the same ruin; the usages of both races have been blotted out by Saxon law, and the very framework of their social life broken up; a breed of heretic colonists lords it in the conquered land; a heretic Church, as it is impiously called, has supplanted the revered Church of our fathers. Common wrong and oppression have thus tended to make Irishmen more united than they have formerly been; the settlements of rapine have not struck root in the land; and Irishmen, though for the moment quiet, are certainly more ready to rise, as one people, against their tyrants than they have been in the centuries of the past. I look to the Church mainly to combine and to give strength to the movement; the Church never changes and is a mighty power in our land; Irishmen were never so near achieving success as when Rinuccini swayed their councils. There is a good hope, too, of assistance in other ways; the second Charles Stuart and his brother are vassals of the great King of France; he is putting down the hateful votaries of Calvin with a steady hand; the son of St Louis may ere long engage in a more sacred crusade for the welfare of the Church, and he is the most powerful monarch in Europe."

## CHAPTER II

I WAS named Gerald after my revered grandfather, and grew up a healthy and strong boy; my vigorous frame has stood me in good stead through life. Father Nicholas used to tell me a great deal about the stirring events of the times which led to the grand rising of Ireland in my early youth, and I have heard much about them in after years. After the death of the bloody usurper, Cromwell, Charles II. was restored to his throne amidst loud rejoicings in England; he long traded on the undeserved popularity he had won. By degrees, however, the artful but frivolous schemer became suspected by large parts of the English nation; he was accused of neglecting his fleets and allowing the Dutch to beat them; he was denounced as a mere dependent of the mighty Louis XIV. But what was most against him was that he had married a Catholic wife and that he was believed to be half a Catholic; the disgusting licentiousness, too, of the man and his Court stank in the nostrils of decent and law-abiding people—I wish to give Englishmen their due when it is their right. Factions made up of Puritan zealots, as they were called, of old soldiers of Cromwell, of dissatisfied courtiers, and of the great party known as Whigs, combined to give him vexation and trouble and struck his authority a weighty blow; another circumstance threatened the very hold of the Stuarts on the throne. His brother James, the Duke of York, was a true Catholic—this, indeed, was the best that could

be said of him; he had lately married a young Catholic princess; and as Charles had no lawful offspring there was a prospect that a line of Catholic kings might again reign in England. The English, savagely heretic since the days of Elizabeth, rose up to prevent such an event as this; Protestant fanaticism and passion prevailed for a time; the great Whig families which held the vast Catholic lands, confiscated by the adulterer, Henry VIII., took part in a movement of extreme violence; a strong faction insisted that Monmouth, a bastard of Charles, should be declared the heir of the crown; and a Bill actually passed the English House of Commons excluding the Duke of York from the succession, which was his unquestionable right. Meanwhile cruel and infamous efforts were made to excite the worst passions of all sorts and conditions of men against those who held to the ancient Catholic faith in England. A "Popish Plot," as it was called, was invented; a wretch of the name of Oates, and other miscreants of the kind, noised it abroad that there was an immense conspiracy to murder the king, to lay London in ashes, and to hand England over to the King of France, and that all this was the work of wicked Catholic traitors. Scores of innocent Catholics were cruelly done to death, noble Catholic blood flowed from many an English scaffold; the whole kingdom was in confusion, and almost mad, for a year, such were the effects of a lie on the heretic English mind.

Ireland, comparatively speaking, was but little stirred by this outburst of barbarous frenzy in England. One great Irish victim, however, was made a cruel sacrifice. Oliver Plunkett, the primate of the true Church at Armagh, a scion of the noble Danish house of Fingall, became a prey of vile creatures of Oates; he was dragged to London, refused time to make proof of his innocence, and

hanged, at Tyburn, like a common felon. "God will avenge this crime!" Father Nicholas exclaimed, when he told me of the deed of blood; "we see again the days when the heathen priests of the Capitol threw Christian martyrs, in scores, to the lions; and the heretics will go the way of the priests of the Capitol." Offaly was not much disturbed by the so-called Popish plot: it was far from the scenes of factious English strife; indeed, it took ten or twelve days, at least, for tidings to reach us from the nearest English seaports. Yet the tempest that swept over England did not wholly spare us; we were made to feel something of its destructive influences. A brood of thieves, called "discoverers," had for many years filched lands away from ancient Irish families, by setting up claims through titles extinct for ages. One of these villains, thinking the occasion good, made an "information" in the courts in Dublin, and pretended that the few acres that had been left to us had, centuries before, been forfeited to the British Crown. We were harassed, too, at this time, in another way; what was called an "Inquisition" was held in our ancient town of Dangen, to prove that the O'Connors were not "innocent Papists," and that we had long been outside the shelter of the law—the law, God help us, that had been laid down by Cromwell. My father attended the court with myself; the thing, from beginning to end, was a mockery of right; I shall never forget the words of the perjured witnesses, the looks of a sheriff of the true Cromwellian breed, and the verdict of the honest Cromwellian jury. Yet the traditions of the name of O'Connor saved us; our lands and our home were declared lost, and my father was condemned; but Ormond put an end to these proceedings of wickedness and fraud.

Ere long a turn had taken place in the affairs

of England, not without memorable results in the future. The English House of Lords rejected the measure which sought to deprive the Duke of York of the crown, and refused to acknowledge the claims of the bastard Monmouth; it was not swept away by the passions of the hour. Meanwhile the hideous perjuries of Oates and his crew ceased to be believed; the thirst for Catholic blood had been slaked; Catholics were not sent to the block and the gibbet; a monstrous imposture was brought to light. At the same time, real conspiracies against the life of the king were detected: these were partly the work of desperate men; but Whigs in high places had a share in them; more than one of these traitors, I have since heard, had been in the pay of the great ruler of France. Charles, by no means wanting in what has been called statecraft, seized the opportunity his enemies gave; the conspirators were tried and rightly condemned; he dissolved, as the phrase is, his Parliament, and appealed to all Englishmen to rally around his throne. The perilous venture was completely successful; the Whigs and their faction were laid in the dust; the king suddenly became possessed of more absolute power than had ever belonged to the race of the Stuarts. Things were in this state when Charles unexpectedly died; his brother, lately hunted down and proscribed, succeeded to the crown without a murmur of complaint, and took the title of James the Second; though a Catholic, he was for a time popular; he retained the immense authority his brother had secured. We heard all this through Father Nicholas, and from the rumours which, even in Offaly, reached us at last. I well recollect, now, the good priest more than once told me, that these and other events of the time would probably have great results in Ireland. "The King," he would say,

"is a true son of the Church; he can do nearly what he likes in his three kingdoms; he may have to struggle with the evil heresy which has struck deep roots in the souls of Englishmen; and if he is wise, he will be cautious and prudent. But he has Puritans, Cromwellians and Whigs at his feet; his Parliament is ready to do his bidding; what is called the Anglican Church is merely his footstool. Besides, he has the support of Louis XIV.; and the great king is supreme at home and abroad. He has just abolished the execrable law which assured the impious Calvinists of France what they called their rights; for many years he has been breaking these sectaries down, prohibiting their assemblies and preventing their worship; and now that they have been made mere outlaws, they have as yet made scarcely a sign of resistance. His power in France will, therefore, be largely increased, and at present he is almost the lord of the Continent. Vienna has just escaped from the scimitar of the Turk, the heretic states of Germany can do very little, the unwieldy empire is well-nigh impotent. James and Louis, if united, can rule Europe; it is impossible but that a Catholic king of England will not restore the true Church to its place in Ireland, and will not redress, to some extent at least, the cruel wrongs of a deeply-injured race. The princes of Offaly, and many others of the noble Irish and Norman blood, may hope that they will have their own again."

Mighty events followed, important for the whole of Europe, and of the highest moment for Ireland and her fortunes; the predictions of Father Nicholas were not realised. Priests, indeed, I have often observed, are too sanguine in their hopes; they do not rightly judge of things in their zeal for the Church. I have studied the history of these times, in my present retreat, and have heard much of it,

besides what I saw myself; a great deal that has been laid to the charge of the king, for what occurred in England, is the exaggeration of fiction, or is simply untrue. He had only been a few weeks on the throne, when fanatical heresy raised its head again; Argyle, a great Whig noble, appeared in arms in Scotland; Monmouth landed suddenly on the southern coast of England, gathered around him levies of Puritans and other sectaries, called Protestant England to rally to his cause, and impudently assumed the title of King. The two risings, especially that of Monmouth, were with difficulty put down; if severe measures of vengeance followed, they were nothing to what had over and over again been done in Ireland—they were but the penalties attached by law to rebellion. Nor was the conduct of the king, in England, during his short reign, as tyrannical and iniquitous as it has been described by his enemies. He endeavoured to weaken the effects of the barbarous laws, which placed the true Church and its priesthood under an infamous ban, and which struck out Catholics from the service of the State. But the "dispensing power," as it was called, was a prerogative of the crown; it had been repeatedly exercised by a long succession of kings. He endeavoured to raise the Church from the abasement in which she had been kept down, and admitted Catholics of distinction to his Council; like Charles the Second, he published "Declarations of Indulgence," as their name was, which extended freedom of worship to all his subjects. Acts, however, like these ought hardly to be condemned by a people which has made "liberty of conscience" its boast; and if James exerted himself to form a standing army, this was a necessity in the circumstances of the time. The king, therefore, was very different from what he has been painted; indeed, much has to be said for what he

did in England; but he was not cautious or prudent, as Father Nicholas had hoped: he went a great deal too quickly at his work; he took more than one step that was contrary to law, and unwise. Yet these were not the real causes of the loss of his crown, and of the revolution which followed. He was at the height of extraordinary power; he believed that he held England at his will; he did not reckon on the fanaticism of his heretic people, on the stubborn and blind bigotry of the English nature, and especially on the illwill of the great Whig lords and gentlemen, who feared that he would restore their sacrilegious booty to the Church. He acted foolishly, too, in the matter of the birth of the Prince of Wales; and he exasperated thousands of his subjects by placing Irishmen in his English army, a mistake that had much to do with his unhappy father's ruin. In a word, in England he was rather an injudicious than a bad sovereign; but nothing can have been more contemptible than his fall; it brought out all that was worst in an ignoble character.

The conduct of the king, in this part of his reign, was different in Ireland from what it was in England. Ormond, now in old age, was dismissed from his exalted post; he had been rather too independent of late. Much is to be laid to his charge, but he was a great Irishman; our family certainly owed a debt to him. The king's brother-in-law, Clarendon, was put in his place; he was an Englishman, and a mere courtier. His father had been one of our worst enemies; he had done his best, when at the head of the council of Charles, to confirm the infamous Cromwellian forfeitures. What were the intentions of James for Ireland will never perhaps be known. His probable object was to form an Irish Catholic interest to give support to what he might do in England, as had been the purpose of his father

before, but he certainly wished to keep Ireland in English bondage. He exercised, however, in Ireland his "dispensing power." Catholics were admitted to the Council Board in Dublin; Catholics obtained commands in the small Irish army. Tyrconnell was, ere long, placed at the head of this force. He was a tool of the king, and a bad soldier, but he had done something to lessen the cruelty of the law which gave our lands to the Cromwellian spoilers, and he replaced Protestants by Catholics in several regiments. A strange and sudden stirring was then seen in Ireland, extending over the greater part of the country; it was the forerunner of a truly astonishing movement. The Protestant colonists took alarm though a hair of their heads had not been touched. They believed that a great revolution was at hand; they began to tremble for the possessions they held by wrong; many even thought their precious lives in danger. Not a few fled from Ireland as if from a pestilence. Some sought refuge in the walled and fortified towns, hundreds shut themselves up in their own dwellings surrounded by bands of ill-armed retainers. They stood, in fact, like angry beasts at bay; as for the Irishry, and even the Englishry of the ancient stock, they felt that a better time was at hand, and began to look forward with hope to the future. Their common sufferings, as Father Nicholas had foreseen, had brought together the two races divided of old; the heirs of the barons of the Pale and of the princes of our blood, felt that the recent settlers were their true enemies, and, scarcely knowing it, joined in a movement against them. These feelings spread everywhere through the humbler children of the soil; the peasants refused to pay rents to their alien masters, and in some places angrily rose up against them. In Offaly descendants of our dependent chiefs came, even from France and

foreign lands, to do honour to their former rulers. For miles around the sons of our ruined clansmen flocked to offer the O'Connors loyal service; we could have raised, at a word, hundreds of sturdy men. The Tudor and Cromwellian colonists looked on aghast; the settlement of the sword had no foundation; the evil tree, planted in blood and ashes, had never struck root.

Great events, meanwhile, had taken place in England, which had a decisive effect in the world, and made the Continent and Ireland an immense battlefield. James had irritated and alarmed the greatest part of his subjects; his evident purpose to exalt the Church and to give Catholics the same rights as Protestants had filled his heretic people with angry resentment. At the same time, a great German league had been formed against Louis XIV. William, the Prince of Orange, the son-in-law of the king, had for years been the soul of coalitions against France, and aspired to be the head of the new alliance. A conspiracy, of which Whig nobles were the heads, was secretly combined to invite William to invade England, and to vindicate what were called her liberties. The prince, after some hesitation, gave a favourable reply; he felt the immense importance of having England on his side in the impending conflict with France. He landed at a place called Torbay in the autumn of 1688. He was never a great soldier, but he was a great man; he ran enormous risks and braved deadly peril, for the English people were not at heart with him; but a strange series of events gave him complete success. For some days hardly an Englishman appeared in his camp, but Whig partisans came in by degrees, and, as he had a considerable Dutch army, he was able, without being attacked, to advance towards London. Meanwhile James had marched westward

to defend his crown; his soldiery were ready enough to fight, but the unhappy king was, so to speak, paralysed, and the conspiracy had well-nigh control over his army. The master spirit among its chiefs was John Churchill, to whom I have referred before; he owed much to a too generous master, but he had already given proof of real military skill, and he had the ascendency of genius over those around him; he betrayed his sovereign, and, drawing leading comrades with him, declared, with hypocritical professions, for the Prince of Orange. After this infamous act of treason the army was made powerless; the Princess Anne, a daughter of James but a creature of Churchill and his wife, abandoned her father, and the Whig faction, backed by thousands of partisans, went over in a body to the usurper and his cause. James, with extraordinary pusillanimity, fled to France; his flight destroyed authority and left the throne vacant. A great Convention, as it was called, was held. The crown was bestowed on the prince, with the title of William III., his consort Mary, another daughter of James, accepting the merely nominal dignity of Queen. The Revolution, as it has been named, was an exhibition of baseness and treachery; but for the cowardly weakness of the king it could have hardly succeeded. But it realised to the full the hopes of William III.; thenceforward England would be thrown into the scale against France instead of being in the scale in her favour, and she would probably be the head of the new league. This was all the more deplorable because the result could have been prevented; Louis could have stopped the enterprise of the prince, but his armies were injudiciously marched into Germany. Turenne no longer directed his councils in war.

The revolution that had deprived James of his crown in England, left his authority in Ireland still

intact. Tyrconnell had been placed at the head of the men in power in Dublin, whatever may have been his motives, and those of his master, he certainly did something for our cruelly-wronged people. He removed numbers of Protestants from offices of trust; he largely increased the Irish army; and made Catholics, for the most part, its leaders. Ere long the hopes of the usurper were fulfilled; England, inspired by William, went to war with France; he became the real chief of the league against Louis XIV.; the conflict, in which the enemies were nearly matched, was soon raging from the borders of the Rhine to the Danube. Ireland was still in the hands of James and Tyrconnell; the cause of the fallen king was, or seemed to be, her own, even if he never won her trust or her heart; Ireland rose heroically to defend his rights. I have witnessed the efforts France made, after the defeat of Ramillies, and at the close of the great Spanish war, when thousands flocked to the standards that bore the lilies. But all this was nothing to what was done in those days in Ireland. Our down-trodden race sprang up, as it were from the earth, to fight for their country; they found leaders in the descendants of the old nobles of the Pale, and of the chiefs and princes of the true Irish stock; from the Giant Pillars of Ulster to the Spanish Cape of the south, they banded themselves into a universal rising. One hundred thousand men, it has been said, were enrolled as soldiers out of a population of a little more than a million of souls; Europe has never beheld so general and earnest a movement. Our priesthood left nothing undone to promote what was a Catholic crusade; they preached a holy war against the heretic intruders on our lands, and against the foreign rule of the heretic Saxon; as Father Nicholas had foreseen, the power of the Church was prodigious. Every part of the

country rang with the gathering to arms; the peasantry and the ancient clansmen hastened to form the arrays that had been mustered, old cannon were found, thousands of muskets came in, woods were cut down to make pikes and rude weapons hardened in fire. The officers bestirred themselves to discipline the new levies; by degrees these were fashioned into some kind of order, and were given the names of regiments and brigades. The infantry were ill-armed and ill-drilled; but the cavalry, if very unlike the Maison du Roi, had stout horses, were led by men of birth, and were to prove that they could do great things in the field.

The officers, and, indeed, the men of our cavalry were, for the most part, of the old Englishry of the Pale; their families had been less stricken and beggared than the true Irishry, and were better able to furnish bodies of horsemen. The regiments of Galway, Butler, Dillon, Walsh, Nugent and others were to gain honour in the conflict at hand; some were to be the choicest troops of the Brigade. I was made a captain in Nugent's regiment, though I had not reached my twentieth year; it was formed of men in the neighbouring county of Westmeath. My father was made colonel of a large body of footmen, chiefly composed of the old clansmen of Offaly; this was a better regiment than most of our infantry, for it was commanded by an experienced soldier; but it was miserably supplied with the necessary arms, and, though full of ardour, it could hardly keep its ranks. As our rising spread over the whole country, our enemies fled before it as from a consuming fire; the rush of the Protestant colonists to England became more general; those who remained in Ireland betook themselves in hundreds to the north, where the settlements of their race were large, and, to some extent, established. But in the

three provinces of the south, the Saxon "plantations," as they were called, were swept away by the universal flood; Ulster was the only ark of refuge for the sons of the spoilers. Much has been said and written by the defamers of our race on the devastation and ruin that ere long followed; our soldiers were charged with deeds of blood and rapine, and especially with the sacking of Protestant homes, and with the destruction of the thousands of sheep and cattle that came in their way. These slanders are, in the main, falsehoods; besides, in a rising such as ours was, ill-disciplined and ill-fed troops necessarily committed, more or less, acts of excess; I should like to know how our levies were to exist, there being no regular or sufficient supplies, except on the spoil they could gather up in the field. I have seen French soldiers do much worse things; and it does not lie in the mouths of Saxon revilers to utter such calumnies about our people. In the whole course of the war in Ireland, our army never took its revenge for the horrible wrongs which our race had suffered during four generations of men. It was usually as humane as it was brave. There were no treacherous massacres of the Englishry like that of which Sidney was guilty; no barbarities such as were common in the Desmond war; no horrors like those of Drogheda and Wexford. We did not fling prisoners from the battlements of castles that had yielded; we did not refuse quarter to Englishmen who had come into our hands, unless they brought in the heads of English comrades; we did not set whole districts on fire to produce starvation and to enforce submission; we did not slaughter, pillage and despoil wholesale, without a thought of mercy.

James, after his miserable flight, had been received by the great king with undeserved honours; he had been allowed to hold a kind of mock Court at Saint

Germains, a royal palace. War between England and France had now been proclaimed; Ireland had declared for the discrowned exile; James, loaded with favours by Louis XIV., set sail for Ireland in the spring of 1689. He landed at Kinsale about the middle of March; my father, as a representative of a princely Irish house, went with other leading men to do him homage; he told me what he witnessed and heard. The king was ere long on his way to Dublin; he reached the city in the last days of March; the Protestants having well-nigh disappeared, the mass of the citizens gave him an enthusiastic welcome. He held high state for a few days at the castle; but what to my mind was much more important, he had brought with him a large store of arms from France; and these, though not nearly sufficient for our needs, were distributed among our ill-supplied army. Meanwhile thousands of the colonists who had fled from the south had made their way, I have said, into Ulster; Derry and Enniskillen had received them within their walls in large numbers. The English counsellors and the French officers who surrounded the king resolved to besiege and reduce these towns, almost the last place of refuge for the Englishry in our land; I marched with my regiment to the attack of Derry. The Irish army had been divided into two parts: one to which I belonged advanced across the River Bann, by Coleraine; the main body made slowly its way from Dublin. Our men were before Derry near the middle of April, but they were separated from the town by the broad stream of the Foyle and were unable to do more than make empty threats. This certainly was a military mistake; we only put the townsmen on their guard. We had to advance to the fords of the Foyle at a distance; we were soon joined by the main army; we put the enemy completely to the rout as he endeavoured to

make a stand at a place called Strabane. I have always thought that if, after this brilliant exploit, our army had made for Derry at once we might have put all resistance down, have seized the town, and have avoided a most disastrous siege. But Hamilton, our general, was a poor creature, and besides, I have heard, was a traitor to William. Such men are unfit to be at the head of soldiers; and though General Rosen, a stout chief, and two other French generals were in the camp of James, they had not yet taken the command from Hamilton. We lost an opportunity and marched slowly; we were not before Derry until the third week of April.

Derry was then and is still, I believe, a small town built on the seaward bank of the Foyle, and communicating with the open sea by the river. It was not assailable from the landward bank; it was fortified on the opposite bank by rude walls and a ditch; rather heavy guns had been placed on the bastions and ramparts. Our army had soon taken possession of the only vulnerable side of the town; it spread along the Foyle and the adjoining uplands from a little fort called Culmore, some miles down the river, to the meadows and woodland on the outskirt of the place. We had, however, but few cannon, and these were for the most part weak and small; our horsemen were of little use for the work at hand, and could be only employed in scouting; our infantry, our worst troops, were raw and untrained. At the outset, too, a signal mistake was made. Derry is commanded by a height called the Windmill Hill, and this was not seized, as it easily might have been; had we occupied this point we ought soon to have been masters of the place. We had one battery at least of heavy guns; this ought to have made breaches for a decisive assault. But everything at Derry went against us; we had to be taught the

effects of undue confidence. The king had advanced from Dublin with the main army; he had had a promise from Lundy, the governor of the town, that it would be surrendered to the royal forces, and Lundy, a cowardly traitor, deserted his post. The French officers, too, in our camp declared that the place could not stand for a week, and that anything like a real defence was impossible. In this way opportunities and precious hours were lost; in a short time it had been made manifest that the townsmen had not a thought of yielding, they boldly refused even to hold a parley. I wish to do justice to men of a stubborn and undaunted spirit; but they had prepared themselves to stand a siege for some time, and they had men within their walls who understood war. Several months before the gates of Derry had been shut against a force of the king; thenceforward the town had been placed in a state to resist an attack. Large stores of provisions had been laid in; thousands of men able to bear arms were within the walls; the ramparts and bastions had been strengthened, the streets had been unpaved, to make a bombardment of little effect. The place therefore had become in a sense a fortress, but it would be untrue to deny that its main strength was its stout-hearted garrison. The Englishry had crowded into the town; this was almost their only city of refuge, they had been driven to the verge of the sea; they had made up their minds to do or to die. They found two leaders, besides, that knew what war was, and they were inspired by the fanatical zeal of the men of Cromwell, which had decided the fortunes of many a field. This stern feeling was kept up by their heretic clergy, and, in fact, they were about to fight for all that makes life worth having.

The king had expected that Derry would fall at his bidding; when baffled in this hope he went back

to Dublin. This had a very bad effect on our soldiers; he ought never to have abandoned our camp. Rosen, too, I never heard why, had soon quitted his post; his French colleagues were ere long slain; the command passed again into the incapable hands of Hamilton. For some weeks there was little but skirmishing with the besieged; this showed deplorable want of judgment; every day diminished our forces—and we suffered much from disease—and added to the strength of the town; besides, in the cannonade kept up on both sides, the superiority of the enemy's guns was manifest. We took, however, the fort of Culmore, which made an approach to the place by the Foyle difficult. On the whole we drew our lines somewhat nearer to the walls. But the importance of the Windmill Hill, the key of the position at Derry, was not perceived by Hamilton and his bad engineers, very different from the skilful pupils of Vauban; the garrison were even allowed to fortify this point of vantage. We did not attack the hill until the first week of May, and we made the attack with insufficient forces. The resistance we encountered was fierce and stubborn; our ill-trained footmen were driven back in defeat. The necessity of mastering this part of the defences was seen at last; but will it be believed that nearly a month passed before our army attempted a second effort? By this time the garrison had drawn a deep fosse round the hill, and had raised on it earthworks armed with guns; it had, in fact, been made a kind of irregular fortress. The attack, however, was well conceived and pressed boldly home; some of our cavalry endeavoured to enter the defences by the rear; the infantry, carrying faggots to fill the ditch, assailed the defenders in front and on both flanks. The hill was surrounded by a surging flood of enemies; our men made desperate efforts to cross the

trench and to storm the earthworks; many of their officers had sworn to conquer or to die; at several points we were all but victorious; at one, indeed, the position was nearly won. But the defences had been made really strong; we were unable anywhere to make a true lodgment; the assaults, brave and repeated as they were, slackened, and at last failed. But I will not refuse my tribute to the stubbornness of the foes we met; nothing like it, except at Limerick, has been seen at a siege, and I have beheld several great sieges. Every man in the garrison fought as if the result depended upon himself; they hurled our men back wherever they had reached the earthworks; the fight was a savage struggle of half-maddened races; quarter was not asked for or given on either side. Even the women in Derry took part in the fray; they rushed out of the town to the help of their husbands, brothers and sweethearts exactly as was the case at Limerick.

After this bloody reverse—I scorn to deny it—we tried what a bombardment could do against the place. But something was wrong with the fuses of our bombs; the bombardment, like the assaults, failed. The siege was now turned into a blockade; our army closely invested Derry, and nearly cut off all supplies from the garrison. Our camps spread along the seaward bank of the Foyle from beyond the Windmill Hill to Culmore; some detachments were sent across to the landward bank to close the approaches to the beleaguered town from that side. Weeks passed in this way; the only fighting was occasional skirmishing and a desultory cannonade, in which the superiority of the enemy's guns was again made apparent. Meanwhile the sufferings of the defenders became terrible; disease and famine made victims by hundreds; we could see how the ramparts were manned by lean and ghastly

spectres, scarcely able to hold weapons in their enfeebled grasp. Yet the townsmen refused even to think of yielding; scarce a single deserter reached our lines; we could hear how the bells of the churches summoned the garrison to their prayers, and how solemn shouts of defiance answered the appeals of the heretic preachers. The trial was made all the more appalling because an English fleet was not far off in the Foyle, but we had drawn a great boom, formed of sunken boats and huge beams, clamped together by chains, across the stream; we had constructed two small places of arms on either side of the boom, and had filled them with our best soldiers; we believed that these obstacles made relief from the sea impossible. Nevertheless the blockade dragged on slowly, and Hamilton made another enormous mistake in repeatedly offering the garrison terms, which only betrayed his weakness and gave strength to their hearts. At last Rosen came again to take the command; he made a threat to drive the heretic population of the adjoining county under the walls, and to let them starve if Derry would not open her gates. It was a stern measure, but hardly more severe than that adopted by Villars at the siege of Freybourg, and my great chief was a noble-hearted soldier. The garrison, however, answered the challenge of Rosen by declaring that they would gibbet the prisoners they had in their power—and there were several scores of these. The king, I believe, had countermanded Rosen's orders; at all events they were not carried into effect. Weeks again passed, and by the last days of July the defenders were on the verge of starvation; the misery they had endured was horrible, they had not four days of the vilest food left, and yet the cry was, "We shall die, but we will not surrender." At this crisis the English squadron made a bold effort to relieve the

town; this, it has been said, was at the usurper's positive orders. A frigate and two victualling ships charged the boom, and though assailed on all sides by our fire, succeeded in bursting through the strong defensive barrier, and carried supplies into the famishing town. Our army immediately raised the siege; we had no longer a hope of success; the heroic efforts of Derry had achieved what has been declared a miracle, but we had been miserably commanded from first to last.

Our army retreated from Derry to Strabane, in order to reach the fords of the Foyle. It had lost thousands of men by disease and from want, for it had been miserably supplied all through the siege; it had been defeated, and had lost heart and confidence. When we had crossed the river the news arrived of another disaster that had befallen King James; this compelled us to fall back in increasing disorder, our raw levies deserting in hundreds. Enniskillen, I have said, had been another place whither the Englishry had fled from our universal rising; as at Derry, they had made stand there in considerable force. I did not behold the stirring events that followed, but I have heard the sorry tale told by eye-witnesses on the spot. Enniskillen is a little town, built on an island of the Erne, a long waterline, partly a lake and partly a river, which, in another age, had been defended with admirable skill against Mountjoy by the great Hugh O'Neill. It had no fortifications but an old castle, but the Erne flowed around it like a fosse, and made it a point of vantage not easy to attack. It was at first rather threatened than besieged by a detachment from the king's army; for many weeks the garrison was able to make raids over the adjoining country, and even to send bodies of pillagers into the distant plains of Meath. The defenders,

unlike the defenders of Derry, were thus amply provided with supplies; and though they were quite as steadfast and brave, they had not to endure anything like such sufferings. At last, about the time when Derry was being hardly pressed, General Macarthy—he had been made Lord Mountcashel by the king—was despatched against Enniskillen with some 5000 men; the Duke of Berwick—a bastard of James, the victor of Almanza on another day—was directed to join hands with Macarthy from the north. These divided movements, however, often fail. Turenne has shown how he could defeat them by splendid exploits; Berwick, indeed, routed a detachment from the garrison of the place, but he did not come into line with his colleague; meanwhile the men of Enniskillen received some help from the English squadron which was to relieve Derry, and, what was more important, were sent an excellent officer; I wish to record the name of Wolseley. The battle that ensued has not been fully explained, but our arms met a terrible reverse. Wolseley advanced from Enniskillen, and met Macarthy's troops in a position which almost defied attack. From some unknown reason Macarthy fell back—his men no doubt were nearly all young levies—but this was a false movement that weakened their ardour and courage. Wolseley, suspecting a stratagem, held his troops well in hand, but he kept his enemy well in sight, and, though inferior in numbers, had resolved to assail him; this, indeed, I have been told, was the universal cry of his soldiers. At last Macarthy made a stand near a village called Newton Butler; Wolseley could only approach him along a narrow causeway, with treacherous morasses on either side; it was commanded, too, by the guns of our army; the position really appeared impregnable. Wolseley, nevertheless, fell on with great boldness

and skill; his infantry made their way through the boggy swamps; his cavalry, though smitten by a heavy fire, mastered the pass. Macarthy's army suddenly gave way; I have heard that this was caused by a mistaken order, but all was in a few moments confusion and rout; hundreds of the fugitives were driven into the Erne and perished, hundreds were butchered by the fierce and exulting victors, made fanatics in their hatred of our race and faith. The catastrophe happened on the third day after the relief of Derry; our whole army hastened to make a precipitate flight out of Ulster.

After quitting his army at Derry in the face of the enemy, James had, meanwhile, returned to the castle in Dublin, and had taken the reins of government into his hands. My father, who was in attendance on the king, told me much about what he saw and heard during this part of his unfortunate reign. James was made a puppet of two parties which regarded each other with deep distrust; his English courtiers wished to make Ireland a mere stepping-stone to a restoration in England and to keep Ireland still in subjection; the leaders of our race and the old Englishry insisted that Ireland should be free from the Saxon yoke. The king certainly inclined to the English faction; like his father, he would have Ireland a tool in his hands; but happily the French counsellors, who ruled him through the great king, required him to throw himself into our cause. I believe he tried to protect the few Protestants who remained in Dublin from the natural vengeance of the long-oppressed Catholics; but, as was to be expected, he could not keep all disorder down, or restrain angry passions suddenly let loose. He has been cruelly condemned for one of his measures, issuing a false coinage and making it current for a time; but nearly the same thing was

done in France during the terrible years of the war for Spain; and there was no other way to give the soldiers their pay. This device, however, incensed the Irish Protestants, perhaps, more than anything else; many years afterwards the famous Dr Swift—I was in Dublin when the hubbub arose—set the citizens mad by writings against a coinage, which the Protestants compared to the base money of 1689. For the rest, the king held a Parliament at the King's Inns—the place where my father had first seen John Churchill—he had been made a member of the House of Commons for the borough of Dangen, the Philipstown that had risen around the ruins of one of our great castles: he gave me an account of what took place in that noble assembly. It has ever since been defamed by our enemies — their interest alone would make this certain; the records of what it accomplished have been carefully destroyed; the very memory of it has been well-nigh forgotten. But it was a Parliament that more truly spoke out the mind of Ireland than any Parliament that has sate before or since; it naturally contained a large majority of the men of our faith, but it had more Protestants within it than any Irish Parliament had Catholics since the restoration of Charles II. It was for the most part composed of the old Englishry, more wealthy and powerful than those of our race; but there were several descendants of heads of our tribes and clans; there was a considerable number of the *noblesse* of the gown. Some of the laws it enacted were just and wise; it made a provision for the clergy of the true Church, and even for the heretic pastors; it secured what is known as freedom of conscience in a way that does not exist in England, or in any part of Europe. It has been denounced for declaring that Ireland was not subject to the laws made by the

English Parliament; but this, I understand, had always been the doctrine of our best lawyers; and it has been savagely condemned for repealing the infamous statutes which gave a wicked sanction to the rapine of Cromwell, as if the foulest wrong was never to be redressed. In this matter, however, it tempered justice with mercy; and as to the measures it took against traitors, rebels to the crown, I have been informed that the English House of Commons did the same thing against all who were described as rebels to William III.

## CHAPTER III

THE reverses that had befallen our arms in Ulster had had calamitous results far outside of Ireland. The three last Stuarts had forced the heretic Church of England on the Scottish people; and as the Scots were heretics who clung to the faith of John Knox—a Calvinist I have heard of extraordinary parts, who constructed a scheme of Church government of his own—and they for years resisted what they described as attacks on the conscience of man, accompanied as these were by severe acts of repression. James, too, had been a bad ruler in Scotland; he made an unwise use of extravagant power; and when he had abandoned his throne in England the great majority of Scotsmen declared against him. William and his consort were proclaimed King and Queen of Scotland; the mass of the adherents of John Knox—they probably were three-fourths of the nation, and were known as Presbyterians from the form of their worship—threw themselves eagerly into the usurper's cause. The fallen king, however, had many partisans; most of the Scotch nobility had become votaries of the English Church, as was to be expected from courtiers at Holyrood and Whitehall; and—for sectaries are usually rent by dissensions—an extreme Calvinist faction, half crazed by fanatical folly, would have nothing to do with the new order of things, and if they could not set up what they called the "pure covenant," a kind of revolutionary

"Government of the Saints," they actually preferred the side of their ancient tyrants. But the principal supporters of James were found in the populations of what are known as the Scottish Highlands, a great and wild region, cut off from the plains of the Lowlands by ranges of mountains and arms of the sea, and forming a distinct and peculiar country. This vast tract, to be entered only by scarcely penetrable passes through the hills, from which successions of torrents descend, girt round on three of its sides by a tempestuous sea, and itself a land of heath, lake, moors and chains of rocky heights, was, unlike what had been the case in Ireland, fenced strongly out from the Saxon invaders, who had taken possession of the Pale of the Lowlands, and offered, indeed, no attractions to their greed. Within its borders the race of the Scottish Gael had lived for long ages under their native chiefs in their ordered system of tribes and clans, enjoying an independent life of their own, and true to the faith and the usages they had always revered, as had been the lot of the Irish race before Norman and Saxon set foot on its soil. The chiefs had often disputes and quarrels among themselves, as unhappily has been seen in our annals; but they had generally taken the part of the Stuarts when troubles arose in England and Scotland; they had done great things under a mighty leader, Montrose, when the English Parliament had made war on Charles I. Many of the chiefs were now in arms for his son James; they had found a champion in a kinsman of Montrose, a daring and able soldier of the name of Claverhouse; they were now ready to descend with their clans on the Lowlands, to join hands with the malcontents in Scotland—these, it was believed, would be in considerable force—and to make a bold stroke to put the late revolution down. The Castle of Edinburgh

was still holding out for the king; so were other castles and fortified points of vantage.

Had we been victors at Derry and Enniskillen, Ireland would have been in our hands, at least for a time; it had been the intention of the Council of James to send a large Irish contingent to maintain his cause in Scotland. We had, however, but the wreck of a defeated army, as we slowly effected our retreat on Dublin; thousands of our raw infantry had left their columns, and were wandering over the country in little knots and bands, subsisting, as they best could, on pillage; only three or four hundred men could be despatched to the aid of Claverhouse; and these were rude levies, under ill-trained officers. I had the tale of the stirring events that followed from one who took part in the campaign in the Highlands. Mackay, the general of William, at the head of three or four thousand men, for the most part regular and well-armed soldiers, had with difficulty reached the summit of a pass leading between hilly crags and beside a mountain torrent, into the range for ages known as the Grampians, which forms the main barrier of the Highland country; his little army, exhausted by a weary march, and not expecting an enemy at hand, was spread along a valley in the spurs of the hills. The scouting parties suddenly gave the alarm; in a short time the eminences above the camp were alive with swarms of the Scottish Gael, rushing down with exulting shouts to the battle.

Unlike our Irishry, the clans had not been broken up by centuries of invasion and incessant strife; each formed a little fighting force in itself, a unit of attack under its own chief, all were armed with the formidable broadsword, which, history tells us, made havoc of the legions of Rome, in the great war with Hannibal. The scene was almost exactly the same as the scenes I have heard of only the other day,

when the Highland tribes, rising in the cause of the grandson of James, twice scattered the best troops of England like sheep, before they were overwhelmed on the bloody field of Culloden. The clansmen—and, it may be remarked, the Irish contingent was next to the place of honour on the right—swept forward, unbroken by a sharp and steady fire; they discharged their pieces as they closed with their foes, and then, falling furiously on them with the terrible claymore, they made a frightful slaughter with their practised hands. The battle was over in a few minutes; the bayonet proved no match for a better weapon; the ranks of the Englishry yielded and were soon broken up; Mackay's army was driven down the pass in precipitate flight. Claverhouse, who, at the head of a handful of horsemen, had, like a true soldier, been in the thick of the fight—a general, he had remarked, must make his men know him—had unhappily fallen in the very hour of victory; had he survived, Scotland might have been lost to William III. But his command devolved on an incapable man; divisions grew up among the Highland chiefs; the clans lately triumphant were ere long scattered among the hills and glens.

The authority of the usurper was, before long, established over nearly the whole of Scotland. The Highlands, however, now and then stirred; a Highland tribe was surprised and massacred, by the orders, it has been said, of the new Government. There was much indignation even in England, but what was this compared with the many crimes of the same kind in Ireland, what to the massacre of the O'Connors and the O'Moores by the remorseless Sidney? Our army, after its retreat, was in a woeful plight. It had lost nearly half its footmen by disease or desertion; its discipline had been destroyed, its ranks broken up. Even the better

trained cavalry had cruelly suffered. Yet the enthusiasm of our race, to some extent at least, repaired the havoc and ravage caused by war. The word went out once more from a thousand altars, that "Ireland must, now or never," rise. In an incredibly short time recruits had flocked to our standards from all parts of the country, and the needs of the army had been, in a measure, supplied. Efforts were made to remount our half-ruined cavalry; to form and array the late levies; to make things ready to renew a conflict, which everyone knew must be near at hand; but these, it must be acknowledged, were not very successful. James and his Council took little heed of the army, and, indeed, treated it, I have heard, with contempt. We had very few officers who understood war; we were deficient in all that was required to take the field. Our horsemen, however, soon made a gallant show again; but our infantry, crowded with raw boys and injured by indiscipline and habits of pillage, were even worse than they had been the year before. Our artillery was scanty and deplorably weak. Had William been able to seize the occasion, and to land anything like a great army on our shores, within a few weeks after our late defeats, Ireland must have been overrun and conquered at once. The conflict could not have been prolonged for years; there would have been no fights at the Boyne and at Aghrim, and no siege of Limerick. But, besides that, the usurper, unlike Cromwell, was not a great chief, he may not have had the means to strike, at this moment, in Ireland, with effect. He had gained the first object of his ambition; he had been made head of the State in England, and could employ her resources against France. He was the soul of the coalition which, for some time, had been bent on destroying the supremacy of Louis XIV.

The forces of the League were now in motion from the sea of the North to the Theiss, and the Danube, and along the Pyrenean and Alpine ranges; Germans, Dutchmen, Austrians, Spaniards and Italians were assailing the great king, now without an ally in Europe. Though in the present campaign they had not accomplished much, they had gained important positions on the Rhine. Their advance, indeed, in this direction had been only stopped by the frightful devastation of fair provinces, an act which my great chief, Villars, always deplored. This only added fuel to an already devouring fire of passion and hate. In these circumstances, William was compelled to send the best and the chief part of his comparatively small army abroad, in order to support the allies. He may not have been strong enough to invade Ireland in force.

The power of William had also been greatly weakened by jealousies, dissensions, and party strife at home, owing to his position in the State, and his character. I heard much of all this from Father Nicholas, who, though on the verge of extreme old age, had never ceased to preach the holy war in Ireland, and was now often passing between England and France, and carrying messages to the little Court at St Germains. I heard something too from my father, a member of the assembly at King's Inns. The revolution, which had placed the Prince of Orange on the throne, had not had the enthusiastic support of the nation. It was the work, not of the people of England, but of discontented classes; it had not secured the goodwill of the great body of Englishmen. The shouts that hailed his proclamation had hardly ceased before he found himself on a stormy sea of troubles. He had immense difficulty in steering his course amidst the cross currents of angry faction and passion. The English army had

played a sorry part in recent events; it chafed with indignation against the Dutch soldiery. One regiment broke out into open and dangerous mutiny. The heretic Church, too, and the heretic sects of England, had joined against the true Church and the late king; but they were soon at bitter feud with each other; this has always been the case with heretic sectaries. The Whigs had expected that the revolution would bring them revenge on the enemies by whom they had been proscribed; they had looked forward to executions and confiscations. When they found that William would have none of these things, they were filled with sullen but profound resentment. Their adversaries, on the other hand, long known as the Tories, regretted that the throne had been overturned, and feared that the monarchy had received a fatal blow; they looked askance at the foreigner who had placed a crown on his head. William, too, had no popular or attractive arts; his bearing and manner were not gracious. Unlike the Stuarts, he was not the first gentleman in his Court, and when he had formed his ministry from men of all parties, he gave all parties the gravest offence. Besides, he had a high sense of his rights as a king. He endeavoured to be really supreme in England. This provoked widespread suspicion and distrust, and being, as he was, a truly great man, a statesman of extraordinary gifts, he despised the narrowness and bitterness of English factions; and probably, had he dared, he would have endeavoured to make religion really free in England, to relieve all his subjects from penalties of laws against the faith, nay—perhaps even to do right to the down-trodden Catholics, for several Catholic Powers were his allies. For these reasons he had little hold on the mass of Englishmen, and his reign was marked by struggles of parties which viewed him with distrust, by projects

of a restoration of the late king, and by plots to take away the usurper's life, to which it is said, even the greatest men were privy. His authority was thus challenged and impaired. He was a notable instance of how revolution saps established power, destroys loyalty and subverts the props that maintain a throne. Louis XIV. was still an object of almost worship in France; William III. was at best only endured in England.

The arm of William was thus, so to speak, paralysed. He was unable at once to invade Ireland after our disasters; he invaded it at last with a very insufficient force. We had raised the siege of Derry in the summer of 1689. The autumn was at hand when an expedition from England was landed on the coast of Ulster. This army, I have learned, was not more than 10,000 strong; more than half of it was composed of mere recruits, hastily drawn from the plough and the loom. These men had no discipline, training or drill; they were hardly a match even for our bad infantry, for the Saxon has not the aptitude of the Irishman for war. The army, besides, must have been miserably supplied with the requirements necessary for service in the field. It had, nevertheless, a contingent of well-seasoned Dutch troops; there was an auxiliary force of excellent soldiers, for the most part enthusiastic in the usurper's cause, and thirsting for revenge on all his foes of the Catholic name. The hopes of Father Nicholas had not been fulfilled. The Calvinists of France had at first yielded to the summonses of the great king to abjure their false creed; they had been received in multitudes into the bosom of the true Church. Ere long, however, many had relapsed into their evil heresy. Severe measures of punishment were employed against them, and though these were trifles to what Irish Catholics had endured, my great

chief, Villars, I know, did not approve of them, and, indeed, set a very different example, as I shall relate afterwards. Several of the provinces of France stirred with a fierce and wild rising; thousands of the Huguenots, as they were called, fled from the land of their birth, setting at naught "persecution," as their phrase was, "for the sake of conscience," there was indeed a Calvinist exodus from the realm of Louis XIV. After perils and adventures of many kinds, the great body of the exiles found a refuge in Holland, in England, and in the towns of Northern Germany. Hundreds of these rebels, who had fought in the army of France, sailed with the Prince of Orange in his descent on England. The exiles were formed into a regular force, and though a few gave proof of the guilt that is common with traitors, the immense majority did admirably in the shock of battle, and were conspicuous for their dauntless and passionate valour. The leader of the small army, thus strangely composed, was a veteran of more than eighty years, who had received the staff of a marshal from the great king; but, being a Huguenot, he had deserted when the days of trouble had come, and, like many of his fellows, he had thrown in his lot with William III. Schomberg, as his name was, had served under Turenne; he had commanded with distinction in Portugal and the Low Countries; he was deemed throughout Europe to be an eminent soldier. Villars, however, did not esteem him highly. Schomberg, he used to say, was one of the five marshals "who were but the small change of Turenne." He certainly did very little in the campaign now at hand.

With this small and ill-compacted force Schomberg had reached our northern shores in the first days of September. He took Carrickfergus, a seaport of Ulster, and made slowly his way through a wasted country until his army occupied Dundalk, once a

fortified town on the range of the Pale—"the Gate of the Irishry"—leading into the land of the O'Neills. Meanwhile our forces had been assembled in their camps round Dublin. We had an army of at least 20,000 men, the best of the troops that could be brought together; we advanced to Drogheda, the scene of one of Cromwell's worst deeds of blood, in high heart to encounter the enemy. From Drogheda we marched to a kind of tableland surrounding the petty hamlet of Ardee. We established ourselves in a tolerably fertile country, and, though accompanied by a wild horde of followers, our soldiery were exercised in their arms, and to some extent disciplined. Schomberg, on hearing of our approach, marched out of Dundalk and pitched his camp in lowlands between two small rivers, which the autumn rains soon turned into swamps; his only chance of success was to fall on at once, but he hesitated and lost invaluable time. The two armies now confronted each other, but Schomberg did not venture to offer battle. Rosen, in command of the forces of James, would not trust, it has been said, the men of our race; at all events, he remained inactive. Our position, nevertheless, was much the best. Disease fell cruelly on the men encamped on ground which, in a few weeks, became a pestilential marsh. We on the uplands suffered but little from sickness. Deserters, too, occasionally came into our lines; we learned from these that a body of the men who had fought at Newton Butler had joined Schomberg, and were clamouring to fight; but we learned also, what was more important, that a conspiracy had been discovered in the Huguenot ranks, and that some of these traitors were ready to go over to Rosen. Time was spent while we were thus observing the enemy. I have always thought that, had we attacked boldly, we ought to have gained success that might have

been decisive. Schomberg's forces were visibly melting away, not a day passed that we did not see burying parties doing the last honours to officers of rank; the unburied dead lay literally in heaps when we marched afterwards through their camp; noisome exhalations filled the air over a great distance; trains bearing hundreds of fever-stricken wretches were descried trailing slowly towards Dundalk. Assuredly we ought to have given battle; this was the opinion of an illustrious soldier foremost among the leaders of our race at this time. My father had made me acquainted with Sarsfield. He had long made a name for himself in the English army, but had honourably thrown in his lot with the fallen king. He was in subordinate command to Rosen, and he earnestly entreated his superior to fight. The marshal, however, would not listen to a better man; this, indeed, was often the hard fate of Sarsfield. A great opportunity, I am convinced, was lost. At length Schomberg leisurely effected his retreat, and fell back, unmolested, on his way towards Ulster. He had lost more than a third part of his army; his remaining soldiery were worthless for months.

The invasion of Ireland had completely failed; there was an outburst of wrath and even of alarm in England. An inquiry proved, I have read, that Schomberg's army had been sent into the field in a pitiable state; and that English military administration was as bad as possible, as was conspicuously seen in the reigns of the last two Stuarts. Commissions had been lavished on fribbles and fops, through Court favour or mere corruption; enormous frauds had been made in contracts; the provisions, the bedding, the shoes of the soldiers were of the worst quality; everything in the army was out of joint and ill-ordered. All this, no doubt, was in part due to official negligence and to the revolution itself; but

want of preparation for war, as we see in their history, is a defect in the character of the Saxon race; they can fight like bulldogs, but cannot make ready for fighting. The same vices were discovered in the administration of the fleets, though this had been the special care of the fallen king; some ships were rotten, many ill-supplied; it was significant that, at the beginning of the war, the young navy of France had been twice victorious, and had won a great battle off the Cape of Beachy Head. The usurper, assisted by his best Dutch officers, addressed himself to arranging and equipping a force sufficient to overcome and subdue Ireland; he devoted his whole mind to his difficult task; he even sent no contingent to the Low Countries, though Luxemburg had annihilated an allied army in the plains round Fleurus. William had large experience in military affairs; abuses were diminished and frauds punished; in a few months he had assembled an army composed of men of many races and tongues—English, Danes, Hollanders, Germans of the North, French Huguenots, and Enniskilleners, as they were called—and as I have been told, 40,000, strong and perfectly supplied. On our side we had not been inactive. We knew that another invasion was at hand; but our efforts had not, and could not have, equal success; what were the resources of Ireland compared to those of England and Scotland? The Exchequer in Dublin was almost empty; base money could not procure what we required for the field; we had not the means to make our army a real instrument of war. The king, too, unlike his adversary, did nothing to help us; and though our officers exerted themselves to the utmost, the distinction between our cavalry and infantry was not removed; our footmen were nearly all of inferior quality. Something, nevertheless, was done in forming them into brigades

and regiments; and though they presented rather a sorry appearance, ill-clad, ill-armed and with but little discipline, they were eager again to measure their swords with the Saxon. One excellent reinforcement had come to our army, 4000 of our troops had been sent to France. The great king had sent us in exchange, 6000 of his good soldiers. But a trifler, Lauzun, had replaced Rosen: Lauzun was an adventurer, who knew nothing of war, and Berwick, though one of his subordinates, was little more than a boy.

William, at the head of his large and well-appointed army, had landed at Carrickfergus by the middle of June 1690. He was usually slow and cautious in the field; but unlike Schomberg, he advanced rapidly and had soon reached the territory of the O'Neills, where Ulster joins the northern verge of Leinster. Our army had marched from Dublin to fight the enemy; it had taken the positions it had held the year before; but at the intelligence of the usurper's approach, it fell back in retreat. This, Sarsfield—he had almost become my friend—said to me, was a grievous mistake. "We ought to have fought," he exclaimed, "on this well-chosen ground; it is pusillanimous to give way without firing a shot." Lauzun, however, and his Frenchmen would not allow us to make a stand in an open country without obstacles of any kind; they insisted on our seeking a strong line of defence; the king had no will of his own, and seems to have acquiesced. Our army was much weaker than its foes in numbers, and at least half of it was composed of bad elements; but the French soldiery were some of the finest in Europe, and our cavalry had become an excellent force. We made a halt, and encamped along the southern bank of the Boyne, the stream that divides the counties of Louth and Meath; here we made preparations for a defen-

sive battle; the enemy would have to cross the river, in our faces, from the northern bank. The position was not without natural strength; the Boyne covered our front, with its broad and deep current; a breastwork had been thrown up at accessible points; the hedges and farmhouses on the southern bank had been hastily entrenched or fortified. But there were fords in the river at Drogheda, and higher up at a place called Oldbridge; our army could be turned on both its flanks, a grave peril to inexperienced troops; and—a capital mistake—it had no safe avenue of retreat, for the road to Dublin was almost closed by a narrow pass at Duleek. We had, however, one real advantage—we only showed part of our first line to the enemy; our reserves were concealed in folds of the ground: this was not without results in the battle at hand. The tent of James was pitched in our rear, on the uplands of Donore; he never stirred from it to give heart to his men, and he was to look idly on in the great trial on which we had staked our fortunes. The French chiefs, however, bestirred themselves to make ready for the fight; Lauzun and Berwick did not fail to examine the ground; even Tyrconnell, who was present, rode along our lines; nor were the leaders of the Irishry behindhand in their work. Sarsfield was the master spirit of our noble cavalry; my father's regiment of the men of Offaly made a gallant appearance.

The advance guard of the enemy was descried in the early morning of the 30th of June. The main battle was ere long on the ground; dense columns of scarlet, of blue, of grey, with long trains of artillery in the rear, began to deploy on the amphitheatre of low uplands which slope down to the northern bank of the Boyne. The hostile cavalry, as usual, was on both flanks: the infantry and the guns filled the space between; the front extended over perhaps a

mile; we could see our adversaries almost to the last man. Sarsfield pointed out to me the English guards with whom he had served in Monmouth's rebellion, and the Dutch regiments upon the field; we already knew the look of the French Huguenots and of the men of Enniskillen, and others of the Saxon colonists. In a short time a body of horsemen splendidly attired, advanced from the front and approached the river; this was William attended by his staff. I can see him now, as he coolly examined our lines, his stern, thin face showing from under his plumed hat, his weak frame stooping from the weight of his cuirass and almost bending towards the neck of his charger. The group was so near that we brought guns to bear upon it; a shout rose from our camps as we saw the usurper reel in his saddle; but the wound was a mere scratch, and in a few moments he was riding before his army as though nothing had happened, the troops breaking out into enthusiastic acclaim. "Think of the two men," was Sarsfield's bitter remark in my hearing, "who are about to fight for a crown on this field; would to God we could exchange kings, and I would not much fear what might happen." The armies had taken their positions, as the day wore on each kept up a desultory cannonade; our guns were fewer and weaker than those of the enemy; but we suffered little, as a large part of our troops was concealed. When night fell a close watch was kept on both sides; as the day was dawning I came across Sarsfield, riding off with his horsemen to our left and our rear, passion and alarm marked on his noble features. When I asked him what was the matter, "Lauzun," he made answer, "is already only thinking of the means of retreat, he is sending off all the Frenchmen, our best soldiers, to hold and defend the pass of Duleek, for part of the enemy's cavalry is moving in that direc-

tion, and I have received positive orders to support the French. This fatal step is the true way to lose the battle; we ought never to have taken a position with a defile in our rear; but when we had taken it we should have kept our whole army on the ground, and risked everything in a struggle to the death; this detachment is a wretched half measure that may work out ruin. Three-fourths of the cavalry, however, will be on the field, they, and you, too, Gerald, will do their duty; I am afraid of the greater part of our infantry, but your father and his men will hardly flinch; we must put our trust in a good cause and ourselves."

The summer sun of the 1st of July 1690, a day of mourning and woe for our race, had ere long risen over the armed masses about to close in battle. We perceived that the enemy's right wing had been left bare of cavalry; the horsemen had marched away to cut off our retreat at Duleek. After some skirmishing the whole of the usurper's front pushed forward to the bank of the Boyne, covered by guns firing over the heads of the men; the Dutch Blues held the post of honour to the right; the Saxon colonists, the Huguenots, the English redcoats, and a regiment of Danes formed the centre and left; the cavalry on the extreme left were still out of sight. From Oldbridge for more than half a mile towards Drogheda the river looked like a thicket of green boughs, the badge the soldiers were ordered to wear in their headgear. Loud cheers, mingling with the drums on the northern bank, burst forth from the armed throngs of many races, arrayed in uniforms of different hues and under different standards, which struggled forward through the deep and dangerous current; the men, their muskets in the air, made straight for their enemy. In a few moments they were swarming over the southern bank; our muskets

and guns had done them little harm; they had soon stormed our breastwork, and fell on in a terrible attack. Hundreds of our infantry made a brave resistance; the men of Offaly fought like heroes; but raw levies cannot contend against real soldiers; our first line was thrown back in rout on the reserve. Our cavalry, however, was worthy of itself on this fatal day; it charged the Huguenot footmen and put them to flight, it fiercely assailed the English troops and made many of the Saxons bite the dust. I did my best in this furious shock of arms, and cut down more than one Frenchman; a grey-haired warrior, richly clad, with many orders on his breast, fell also, waving his sword, by my side; this I learnt was Schomberg, who, beholding the defeat of his men, had plunged into the river from the northern bank, and had vainly endeavoured to rally the broken fugitives. The battle at this moment was neither lost nor won; our first line of footmen had given way, but our reserves stood fast and were not even seen by the enemy; our horsemen were victorious in a part of the field. Ere long, however, the hostile left wing appeared on our right flank; William had led it in person across the fords near Drogheda; his cavalry fell furiously on our ill-trained and exhausted troops. Nevertheless our horsemen struggled nobly to the last, several regiments made a stand on a low eminence, protected by a kind of fosse at the bottom; they almost destroyed a body of Huguenot horsemen who tried to attack: I beheld the daring rebels in precipitate flight.[1] Our army, however,

[1] My kinsman's account of this *mêlée* is fully confirmed by M. de Bostaquet, a French Huguenot officer of cavalry. *Memoires*, p. 272: "Nous nous mêlâmes parmi les ennemis et les rompîmes; mais le sieur de Belcastel, commandant de notre escadron ayant été fort blessé, Varenques culbuté, le vent et la poussière nous étant contraires, notre escadron se retira en désordre, et sans pouvoir retenir les cavaliers qui se renversèrent sur moi; je repassai le fossé et vis que tout s'en alloit."

was gradually forced back; the reserve of our infantry also broke up; the enemies, as evening fell, were masters of the field. But our army had not many killed or wounded; we made our retreat in tolerably fair order; William did not even attempt to pursue. The French had kept the pass at Duleek open; but if this saved the mass of our troops it may have caused the loss of the battle.

In our last struggle with the French horsemen I struck the sword of a Huguenot officer out of his hand, caught him by the sword belt, and made him my prisoner. He was a Norman gentleman of ancient and noble family, who had exchanged his ancestral name of De Bacquancourt for the Calvinist nickname of Des Vœux; I accepted his parole, and he followed our squadrons. This incident had an immense influence on my life and my fortunes; but for it I would not be writing in my present retreat. Our army made good its way to Dublin, and though hundreds of our men had disbanded, it was less broken up than when it had fallen back from Derry; and the French contingent had lost very few men. I met Sarsfield a few hours after the battle; James had ignominiously fled from the field, and halted less than a day in Dublin; he made off, I heard afterwards, in haste to Waterford, took ship for Kinsale, and sailed in a frigate to Brest. Sarsfield had escorted him in his disgraceful flight. "That man," he told me, "had cursed the soldiers of our race, who had risen in thousands and fought for his cause; like all the Stuarts, he is false and double-dealing at heart." James lost two kingdoms by his craven weakness—I thank God I never saw him again—he is known in the traditions of our people as "James the Coward." We did not strike a blow for his son or his grandson in the rebellions, as they were called, of 1715 and 1745. After one or two

days spent in efforts to restore order, our army set forth in its march from Dublin; we were, perhaps, 25,000 armed men. The spirit of the troops was not bad, but we had lost cannon and much baggage and stores. Had William made good use of his victory he might have placed us in woeful straits. He did not, however, even observe our retreat; he wasted time in entering the Irish capital in state and in aranging affairs of Government; besides, very probably he was delayed by the intelligence of the defeat of Beachy Head and of the disaster of the allies at Fleurus. He always, too, was a laggard in war; I have been told that he once said that he would have given much to have served under the great Condé, who beat him at Seneffe. Villars used to say, "He was a formidable soldier, but a bad chief." We made our way unmolested along the great plain of Kildare and through the ancient Leix of the O'Moores until we had reached the territories of the fallen Desmonds; we obtained some recruits, munitions and supplies on the march; the army, on the whole, had a good appearance when we encamped by the Shannon around the walls of Limerick. But we were scarcely in our stations when terrible news came in; Lauzun and the French officers had refused to make a stand at Limerick, and the French regiments were being sent away to Galway. "We are left to ourselves," Sarsfield cried to his staff—he had, at my father's instance, placed me on it—"these Frenchmen are only thinking how they can get home; they are making for Galway, because it is on the sea. Lauzun told me that roasted apples would break down our ramparts, and that French lives were not to be thrown away for nothing. But this is the last refuge of the Irish race; our only hope is to fight to the death; let us bear ourselves, as I know we will, like men."

The events that followed put Lauzun and the French to shame, and form a memorable record in the sad story of our land. The army, wholly composed of our people, which remained around Limerick, after our allies had gone, was in number about 20,000 strong; it had been beaten at the Boyne, and had made a long retreat, but it was as determined to resist as were the men of Derry, and Sarsfield had breathed into the ranks his heroic spirit. Our first care was to secure the approaches to the place, especially the fords of the Shannon for miles; we had detachments at points along the river as far as the village of Killaloe; this precaution was to prove of no small importance. We exerted ourselves also for many days in gathering supplies in from the country around. The enemy was as yet far away; the peasantry eagerly brought in all that they could; we escaped the horrors of famine that Derry endured. Our next care was to make preparations for the siege at hand; Lauzun had left us a good engineer of the school of Vauban; he skilfully did everything the occasion required. A few heavy guns were on the ramparts; these were placed in position and supplied with gunners; houses were razed that checked or prevented their fire; orders were given to demolish buildings that would screen the enemy's attack. Our artillery, however, was nearly all field pieces; had it been otherwise, I am convinced we should have crushed our assailants. Limerick, nevertheless, was a place of no ordinary strength, exceedingly difficult to storm or to invest; it was defended by men resolved to perish, not to yield, and capable of the greatest efforts behind fortified walls. The city rises along the eastern bank of the Shannon, a deep and broad stream dividing the counties of Limerick and Clare; a large portion of it stands on a small island, called the Kings, cut off from the Limerick

shore by a narrow channel; it is separated into two distinct parts, the English town on the King's Island, the Irish town on the adjoining mainland. The English town was the original city; it had been encircled for centuries by high walls and ramparts, its lofty catheral and the castle of King John were now bristling with cannon, and had some strong points of vantage. The Irish town was of more modern date, but this also had been long walled in; redoubts and small forts had been built around it; the citadel was a formidable work; a bridge, making communication easy, connected the two towns. Limerick, therefore, was, so to speak, a twofold fortress, protected by obstacles very hard to overcome, yet the place had other, and perhaps better, defences. The lowlands around the city were flooded whenever the Shannon rose, and were then changed into swamps in which an army could not exist; a bridge, called the Thomond Bridge, uniting the English town with the Clare bank of the river, gave the garrison access to the country on that side, and made the investment of the fortress a very arduous task.

It was nearly six weeks after the fight on the Boyne when the advance guard of William had drawn near Limerick. The usurper had sent detachments to seize the port of Waterford, in order to have his retreat to England secure; he had made no little delay on his march; he had given us full opportunity to make ready for our defence. It was the second week of August before his army appeared on the low eminences that rise over the city from the east. William, like James before Derry, had been told that the place would instantly yield; this alone can explain the negligence of which he was to give proof. Our outposts fell back within reach of the walls; a storm of fire burst from the batteries of the

citadel and the forts beyond; we cheered exultingly as we saw gaps made in the ranks of the enemy. The guns of the hostile army replied, but we soon perceived that they were field pieces and that their shot fell short. Sarsfield, who was on the look-out from the ramparts, having made sure of this, called me aside, and ordered me to assemble a body of our best horsemen. "The enemy," he said, "has made an enormous mistake; he has challenged and warned us with guns that are of no use; but I have learnt that his heavy artillery is on the way; I will make him pay dearly for his false over-confidence." When night had fallen he defiled out of Limerick by the Thomond Bridge with two or three hundred chosen troopers; we rode along the Shannon on the Clare side as quickly as we could; we crossed the river, where a detachment of our men was in occupation of the fords at Killaloe. Sarsfield knew tolerably well where to seek for his quarry, but the peasantry joyfully became his guides; we surprised and suddenly fell on the enemy encamped in complete security in a valley of a hilly tract which had been worked for mines, and some miles distant from the main army. Our swords soon drank deeply in Saxon blood; only one fugitive escaped to tell the tale of slaughter; in a few moments the whole artillery park, with its trains and munitions, had fallen into our hands. We buried the weighty guns which were being brought up for a siege mouth foremost, and filled with powder, in the ground; we made a pile of the trains and set the whole on fire; our backs had only been turned for some hundreds of yards when a tremendous explosion rent the troubled air; the sound must have reached the usurper's leaguer. William sent off a detachment to cut us off at Killaloe, but our chief, with admirable forethought, ascended the Shannon, and crossed over to the Clare side at a place called

Banagher; within less than two days we were safe within Limerick again. The exploit was brilliant and decisive; it proved how valuable was the Thomond Bridge as a kind of sallyport from which we could issue in force, and take possession of the western bank of the Shannon.

The great deed of Sarsfield compelled William to send for another siege train to Waterford, a distance of seventy or eighty miles, and delayed the attack a considerable time. The importance, too, of the Thomond Bridge had been seen; a detachment was marched across the Shannon to occupy the Clare side of the river and to prevent an exit from the bridge, but it did little or nothing in the events that followed. The main army of the assailants thus weakened was perhaps not more numerous than our own, but it was composed of victorious and well-trained men; the enemy still felt certain that the place would fall in a few days. But a summons to surrender was rejected with scorn; both sides made ready for a bitter and stern trial of strength. The sappers and working parties of the besiegers levelled ditches and fences on the plain before the southern and eastern fronts of the city, and began to make the trenches for the attack; these were armed with heavy guns by the last week in August; fire was then opened in the citadel and the defences around. We could see the usurper encouraging his troops and riding about without a thought of danger; he well knew there was no time to be lost; a shot from the summit of the cathedral only just missed his staff. We kept up as continuous a fire as we could, and made several bold and successful sallies; the forts and redoubts outside the walls — they had been cleared of the surrounding buildings — did much execution, even in the trenches; but our artillery was not sufficient to master the attack, the enemy had

two very powerful batteries. The sap was gradually brought near the front that was threatened; a redoubt was stormed after a bloody struggle; a breach was effected near the citadel and the Church of St John. Preparations were now made for the assault, but it was necessary before this to seize and hold a fort the guns of which had been very destructive; it was furiously assailed by a body of grenadiers, but they were fairly beaten off after desperate fighting. A heavy cannonade was now directed on the breach, and was kept up for two or three days in order to make the attack less difficult, but our French engineer—he was named Boisseleau—had retrenched the breach by the usual means, closing the entrance with obstacles of different kinds; and arms had been given to the occupiers of the adjoining streets, with orders to fire down from the housetops and to fall on the enemy should a lodgment be made within the shattered wall. Meanwhile the autumn rains had begun to set in, the Shannon was rising over the plain; the trenches were being already flooded; the position of the besiegers had become critical; we learned from deserters that they were suffering from disease.

I took part in the glorious fight which ensued, and heard much from prisoners who fell into our hands. William held a council of war on the 27th of August; against the advice of some of his officers, it was resolved to make another assault; the enemy's camp had become hardly tenable. A great mistake, however, was here made; a large body of men was placed, in open daylight, beside the counterscarp; they were not sheltered from our fire, and had no means of replying. After a sharp cannonade on both sides, a column of troops, picked from the hostile infantry, rushed through the ditch and its broken palisades; in a few moments they had struggled over the breach, and had driven the

defenders, overpowered, away. Loud cheers burst from the exulting victors; but, like the column of the English at Fontenoy—I thank heaven I have lived to hear the tale—they were smitten, when they reached the retrenchment, with fire on all sides; the ranks began to waver and to lose their formation. Yet they furiously forced their way onwards, until they entered the streets of the Irish town; but they were charged by our foot and horse in the narrow lanes and ways, and thrown into disorder after a brave resistance. They were harassed, too, by an incessant fire from the housetops; many were struck down by the missiles flung by the townsmen; you could see our women dashing stones and broken iron on their heads, with wild cries. By degrees the column broke into a mere dissolving mass; we fell on the fragments and drove the men across the ditch; the slaughter was terrible, as they could do nothing in their flight. The troops by the counter-scarp meanwhile had suffered a great deal; from whatever reason, they gave no support to the wreck of their comrades; we sated our vengeance on all who came within our reach; the women rushed into the ditch and killed scores of the beaten soldiery with the long knives and daggers they somehow had carried in their hands.[1] Very few of our late assailants escaped; the reserve of the besiegers was soon in full retreat; our batteries opened on them

[1] M. de Bostaquet, *Memoirs*, p. 287, corroborates at many points my kinsman's narrative:—"On tint conseil de guerre chez le roi, et l'on résolut de se loger en plein jour sur la contrescarpe; . . Plusieurs officiers n'approuvoient pas cette résolution: . . . On monta sur le rempart par la brèche, et un détachement de grenadiers anglais entra dans la ville et chassa les ennemis de leur premier retranchement; mais n'étant point suivis, le roi voulant seulement qu'on se logeât sur la contrescarpe, ils furent tous taillés en pièces. . . . Les ennemis chargèrent nos troupes dans leur retraite et nous tuèrent on blessèrent plus de quinze cents hommes. . . . Cette entreprise se servit qu'à nous faire perdre bien du monde." . . .

with destructive effect. In a few hours we beheld signs that could not be mistaken; the trains and baggage were being drawn from camp, a rearguard of cavalry covered the retiring infantry. We were not, however, in sufficient force to pursue; the enemy, as he went off, maintained a bold attitude. We found some of the siege guns in the abandoned trenches, which were becoming filled by the flood of the Shannon.

I have done justice to the men who defended Derry, though enemies and oppressors of our race; they fought well, and braved the dire stress of famine; but the army opposed to them was a bad army. Justice has never been done, as was to be expected, by English chroniclers, to the defence of Limerick; yet it was a noble exhibition of military skill and valour. Abandoned by our allies—nay, despised by them—we defied a victorious and well-prepared enemy, from ramparts declared to be untenable, and beat him off after repeated assaults; the exploit of Sarsfield was a grand deed of war; our soldiery, for the most part rude levies and boys, nay, our women, did wonders in the struggle in the breach. William, after his defeat, took ship for England, leaving his army under the command of a Dutchman Ginkle; he was never seen in Ireland again; he had little to boast of even in his victory on the Boyne. The forces of the invaders spread over the country in winter quarters from Derry to Cork; they occupied the best parts of Ulster and Leinster; no efforts were spared to furnish them with fresh troops and supplies for the coming campaign of 1691. The usurper, indeed, was not wanting to himself in this respect, though he was harassed by vexatious affairs of State. He was condemned for the disaster of Beachy Head; plots to assassinate him were brought to light; his

allies had been beaten in the Low Countries; ere long the great fortress of Mons was to fall, besieged and captured by the great king in person. As for our army, a large garrison was left in Limerick, commanded by a council and the youthful Berwick; and we held the greater part of Munster, and the whole of Connaught. But we had been deserted by our French allies, who, as Sarsfield had foretold, had left Ireland; and though we enlisted thousands of men, and did all that we could to make ready for the field, how could we contend against the power and wealth of England? Another untoward event had also happened; Churchill had been placed high in the councils of William, had been made Earl of Marlborough, and had received the command of an expedition to the south of Ireland; he had attacked and taken the ports of Cork and Kinsale, displaying activity and resource, in notable contrast with the operations of his master before the walls of Limerick. This was a weighty discouragement to us; our communications with France by the sea were well-nigh cut off; we could expect but little help from Louis XIV., who, besides, was at war with nearly all Europe. Sarsfield felt how important this blow was; he used to tell me a good deal about Marlborough, with whom he had served in France and in England. "He is a bad man," he often said, "nay, a miserly villain; he took money from Barbara Palmer, and played false to his master, Charles II.; he owed everything to James, and sold him on a hypocritical pretence. But Churchill, as your father also knows, is a great soldier; Turenne had the highest opinion of him; he saved the army of Duras on the night of Sedgemoor. He had done us more injury than two battles on the Boyne could do; but even with our raw army we will fight for Ireland to our last gasp."

A large part of our army, led by Sarsfield, had defiled out of Limerick, and held the line of the Shannon, not far from Athlone. It had been recruited from different parts of Connaught and was more than 25,000 strong; the men of Offaly, veterans of the Boyne and the late siege, were the flower of the infantry, with my father at their head. The great king sent us a few soldiers and a general of the name of Saint Ruth—an officer who had done good service—but Saint Ruth gave offence to Sarsfield; this was a cause of disaster to us in the field. Ginkle broke up from his camp at Mullingar, in Westmeath, in the first days of June. His army was perhaps equal to our own in numbers, but it was very superior as a military force. Having taken an ancient castle on his march, he appeared at Athlone, along the banks of the Shannon. The town was a most important point of vantage; it rises from the southern edge of a great lake, and is surrounded by marshes on its other fronts; the river flowing through divides it into two parts, one on the Leinster, the other on the Connaught shore; it forms an avenue into the heart of Connaught. Athlone had been fortified centuries before; an old castle of the times of King John extended along the Connaught side; a bridge spanned the Shannon and made a passage, two mills on it were capable of being well defended. There was, however, a ford below the castle. The castle was an old work and had few cannon; the mills were not held by a sufficient force. We had thrown a garrison into the place, and this held the Connaught shore, but our main army was three or four miles distant. Saint Ruth, I have heard, would not listen to Sarsfield, and insisted that Athlone could defy a sudden attack. The weak ramparts on the Leinster side of the town were easily carried by escalade. Ginkle, now master of one shore of the

river, made a determined effort to storm the bridge and to get across the Shannon. But he had met foemen worthy of his steel; the heads of his columns as they reached the narrow causeway were destroyed by a well-directed fire and the pikes of our footmen; the guns of the castle wrought havoc in his ranks; the musketeers from the mills laid many an enemy low. This desperate fighting lasted several days; and, though the cannon of the assailants shattered the walls of the castle, and laid part of the town on the Connaught side in ruins, the heroic defence of the bridge was maintained to the last, though the attack was pressed by an enormously superior force. At last, just as I have heard, as he was about to retreat, Ginkle discovered the ford, and sent part of his troops across; our outposts were surprised and made no resistance; the enemy had made good his way into Connaught. Our army fell back a few miles; the councils of Sarsfield had not been followed; the fall of Athlone was due to Saint Ruth.

The enemy did not attempt a pursuit. When order had been restored in our ranks a hasty council of war was held. I was present as a member of Sarsfield's staff; so was my father, as being a distinguished officer. Saint Ruth, a passionate and over-sanguine man, was furious that a place of the very first importance had been captured, so to speak, under his eye; he chafed at the consequences of his own neglect; he imperiously urged that we must fight a pitched battle in a defensive position to be selected by himself. Sarsfield, and my father especially, were of a very different mind; the enemy, they argued, had an army about as numerous as our own, better armed, better disciplined, better supplied; our army ought to fall back on Galway and Limerick, ought to defend these our only strongholds to the last, and ought to harass Ginkle by irregular warfare.

Saint Ruth, however, would not listen to reason; he swore that he would have his revenge for the loss of Athlone in a trial of strength in the open field. "Will the Irish," he exclaimed, "ever make good soldiers? They have now Cromwell's choice between Connaught and Hell!" As the council broke up, "Gerald," Sarsfield said, "he is throwing our best chances away to soothe his wounded vanity; we shall never agree, but I must obey orders." My father's mind was even more full of forebodings. "I feel," he sorrowfully remarked, "that my last hour is at hand; Turenne had the same presentiment at the Sassbach. But, oh! that I could die, like my great chief, in the sure hope of victory! Should I fall, do your best for these men of our race; and if, as I fear, the cause of Ireland shall be lost, take care of your mother, your sisters, your brother, and be it my legacy to you to avenge your country." The army slowly fell back until we had reached a great marshy tract traversed by a sluggish river, the Suck, and not quite twenty miles from Athlone. Here Saint Ruth determined to make a stand, and to risk everything on the event of the fight. The position he chose, to do him justice —he was a hot-headed but an experienced soldier— was well adapted for a stubborn defence, and especially for troops such as ours unfortunately were. The army was drawn up on a low eminence, resembling the glacis of a fortress, which gave free play to the fire of our guns. Our front and right flank were covered by swamps and bogs through which the enemy must struggle before he could reach us; our left flank had the same kind of protection, and rested also on the hamlet and the old Castle of Aghrim. A rude breastwork had been thrown up before our lines; small bodies of musketeers held the adjoining enclosures. The cavalry and infantry were formed in the usual order, horsemen on both wings, footmen

filling the centre. Saint Ruth was in command of the main battle; Sarsfield was at the head of the reserve at a little distance.

Saint Ruth, attended by his staff, rode along our front; he knew that he had staked all on the hazard. He had, hitherto, taken hardly any notice of our men; he now harangued more than one regiment with impassioned gestures. He had seen Irishmen fight in the armies of France, they had fought like heroes on many a field. Would not they be true this day to themselves and their land? Was Ireland to fall again under the yoke of her tyrants? Was the race to be under the curse of another Cromwell? Were the efforts of two years to be thrown away; or was victory to crown what we should do at Aghrim? Many priests had followed our army, and these holy men left nothing undone, as they appealed to our soldiers by all they could hold dear on earth or in heaven, by the thoughts of family and home, and by their hopes for the future. The Host was reverently borne before the ranks; hundreds knelt as crucifixes were held up to their sight; hundreds were shriven where they stood, and vowed to fight to the death. It was the 12th of July 1691; noon had passed when we had our first sight of the enemy. His army contained many of William's best troops; we could descry Dutch, English and French uniforms; and it appeared to be hardly inferior to our own in numbers. Symptoms of hesitation, however, were seen; staff officers spent hours in examining the ground; I have heard afterwards there was much doubt whether an attack could succeed. It was late in the afternoon when the hostile columns, covered, as usual, by the fire of their guns, were set in motion to assail our front. The men advanced boldly, but were thrown into disorder by degrees as they toiled through the rising and treach-

erous ground; they suffered from the biting fire of our skirmishers; they were almost in confusion when they reached our breastwork. Here they encountered foes as brave as themselves, but fresh, not blown, and in a strong position; they made desperate efforts to force the obstacle, but they were fairly driven back, and they recoiled beaten. But they had soon reformed their ranks and renewed the onslaught; they stubbornly attacked over and over again, but always with the same disastrous results; they were completely unable to break any part of our front. Once, at least, they were hurled down from the breastwork and forced into the swampy flat below; many of our men swept over the barrier and charged them home; the bloody soil was strewn with the killed and wounded. But we could not pursue through the dangerous morass; the enemy gradually rallied, though his attack ceased; we were recalled by our officers to the position we had held. This, I have heard Villars say, is the defect of such a defence as ours was; he often stood on the defensive, no doubt —indeed, his celebrated lines were the bulwark of France—but he nearly always kept the means of attacking his enemy in turn, as was conspicuously seen on the day of Malplaquet.

It was now late in the evening, the rays of the declining sun were lengthening over the scene of the conflict; we had successfully repelled every attack on our front; the enemy only sullenly held his ground. But, meanwhile, a body of horsemen, with musketeers and skirmishers, had crept under the shelter of Aghrim and its old castle, and was beginning to threaten our left flank; a similar movement was being made against our right. The progress of these assailants was very slow, they had to carry fascines with them to gain a footing in the swamp; had they been charged by our reserve they must

have been beaten. I pointed this out to Sarsfield as I stood by his side. "I have had positive orders," he answered, "not to stir from this spot, I have often remonstrated in vain and can only obey." Soon afterwards I saw Saint Ruth fall from his horse at a distance, he had galloped forward to make head against the attack on our left; he was stricken down by a shot while he was encouraging our men. The battle on our side became confused; Sarsfield had not time to move the reserve forward when made aware of his superior's death; our raw infantry became terrified when they felt the enemy pressing both their flanks. The attack on the breastwork was now renewed; the assailants rushed forward with exulting shouts; the obstacle was forced at last after a fierce resistance; our front was driven in and broken. Our men, however, defended every enclosure, and made efforts with heroic courage to rally; but recruits can never be a match for real soldiers; the army before long was in precipitate flight, scattering far and wide in an appalling rout. The victors pursued with relentless energy; their swords made havoc of hundreds of victims; the pursuit, indeed, was a hideous massacre; the ground was strewn for miles with dying men and corpses. I had just time to bid farewell to my beloved Father Nicholas; though more than eighty years old he was in the train of our army, and I had confessed to him in the morning; he had been severely wounded by a savage trooper. "Think not of me, Gerald," he faintly said, "be a true son of the Church and bear in mind the cruel wrongs of your race." Another sight of woe passed before my eyes; the clansmen of Offaly had made a glorious stand and had perished around their leader almost to a man; I paused for a moment to dwell on the mournful spectacle; my father's noble features were in the calm repose of

death. I was roused from my sorrowing thoughts by the voice of Sarsfield, who was trying to cover the retreat with a body of horsemen—"You will live, I trust," he said, "to avenge my friend; what we have now to do is to save all that is left of the army, and to make our way from the field."

The main body of our routed forces made their way to Limerick, but a part took refuge within the walls of Galway. A cruel act of treachery, too common in the annals of our race, occurred after the dreadful scenes at Aghrim; the chief of the O'Donnells, an exile in Spain, had escaped to Ireland, had summoned his old clan to arms, had thrown in his lot with us, and had joined in the defence of Limerick; ere long he had basely made terms with Ginkle. Galway was in the hands of a French governor, whose secret wish was to return to his country; he surrendered the town after a brief parley; with the garrison and our fugitives he marched to Limerick, where he had hopes of embarking in a French squadron. The defences of the city had been strengthened since the siege; new batteries had been formed and additions made to the ramparts; the adjoining lands had been swept bare for supplies, which had been willingly brought in by our true-hearted peasantry. Limerick was now our only remaining stronghold, the last city of refuge for Ireland and her cause, a last and a forlorn hope for our people. Tyrconnell, who had protested against risking all at Aghrim, and many distinguished officers were there; but Sarsfield, as always, towered over his comrades; happily for us he was still our chief and champion. The garrison and all that was left of our army were perhaps about 18,000 strong. These forces were partly encamped on the Clare side of the Shannon, but, for the most part, were within the walls; but the best of our

troops had perished at Aghrim, and the memory of the disaster lay heavily on all hearts, if we left nothing undone to make a stern resistance. It was more than five weeks after his late victory, when Ginkle appeared before Limerick, on the ground occupied by his master the year before; he had with him a powerful siege train, and his army was probably 20,000 men, but his advance had been extremely slow; the experience of the siege had made him very cautious. Having made his trenches before the southern and eastern fronts of the place, he opened fire in the second week of September; a tempest of bombs and red-hot shot was rained into all parts of the city. Our batteries, however, gave a fierce and effective answer; we made more than one bold sally and even beat up the besiegers' quarters, though an English squadron had sailed up the Shannon, and seemed to take part in the attack, we still bravely held out, and that not without hope. The waters of the river were once more beginning to rise, and to threaten the assailants' works and their camp; Ginkle and his army were already in straits; it is now known that the raising of the siege was contemplated in the enemy's councils.

A terrible disaster ere long brought the defence of the heroic city to a close. The bombardment had been slackening for a time; our outposts were not as alert as they had been in their duty. Ginkle, almost forced out of his camp by the increasing flood, resolved to attack Limerick from the Clare bank of the Shannon; this, indeed, was the most vulnerable point; his operations and those of the usurper had not been well conceived. The Dutch general caused a bridge of tin boats to be secretly put together; this was thrown across the river on the night of the 15th of September; a strong body of infantry was over the Shannon before daybreak; it

took possession of the bank that was to be held, our cavalry scouts having been completely surprised. Our horsemen on the spot were stricken with panic; they made only a feeble resistance; they fled partly into the town, partly over the country; our footmen within the walls were too late to attack. Ginkle, keeping some of his forces in his camp to deceive us, marched a large part of his army by the way that had been taken the year before, and crossed the river higher up its course; he was now master of the ground on the Clare side, and made preparations to storm the Thomond Bridge, the key of the position regarded as a whole. On the 22nd of September his troops were in motion; a great column of his choicest footmen made a bold onslaught on the head of the bridge, which was covered by two fortified outworks, but the assailants were more than once beaten back; they suffered grievously from the fire of our skirmishers, half concealed in the adjoining gravel pits and quarries. The struggle raged for perhaps two hours; reinforcements were hurried forward from both sides; the outworks fell at last into the hands of the enemy, who, however, had dearly paid for his first success. The bridge now became the scene of a murderous conflict; the attack and the defence were equally stern; the narrow causeway was filled with the brave men who had fallen; the bayonet and the pike did their bloody work well; there was hardly any firing, and not a thought of quarter. At last the pressure of the assailants became too great to endure; our men were gradually forced back to the end of the bridge; but the fight was not over, nothing had yet been decided. Most lamentably at this moment, a French officer—the shadows of evening were already long—ordered the drawbridge connecting Thomond Bridge with the city to be raised; he feared a rush of the

enemy into Limerick, but as yet there was little danger of this; it was the rash act of a man who had lost his head. The brave defenders of the bridge saw their retreat cut off; many flung themselves into the Shannon and sank in its waters; some met their deaths in a wild effort against the foe; some sought mercy from the relentless victors in vain. A horrible massacre took place on the bridge; some hundreds of victims, I have heard, were butchered.

This frightful catastrophe incensed our army, already filled with dislike of the French, and began to make the bravest hearts despair. Tyrconnell had by this time died; the council placed in his stead was distrusted; a party within the walls had already talked of surrender—Sarsfield—this I heard from his own lips—saw that the defence could not be prolonged; it was better to make terms, we felt, while we had still arms in our hands. After negotiations that took some days the celebrated Treaty of Limerick was signed, a huge stone near the bank of the Shannon is a mark of the spot. I saw some of the signatures to the compact; I was informed by my chief of the main provisions that it contained. The city was to be given up to William, now recognised as King William III.; a part was to be occupied by Ginkle's army; but a part was to be still held by our troops until the generals on both sides had their arrangements complete. Our army was to march out of Limerick with the honours of war; it was stipulated that all men who chose to serve in the army of the great king were to be allowed to embark for France in transports, free to sail from Limerick or Cork. These were the conditions of the military part of the Treaty as it was called; it is just to remark they were honourably fulfilled. It was unhappily otherwise with the civil part of the Treaty; this was infamously violated

before many months had passed. By this solemn agreement a pledge was given that all Irish Catholics should have the privileges and rights they had enjoyed in the reign of Charles II.; and that the inhabitants of Limerick, with all soldiers and officers in five counties still loyal to James, all persons under the protection of these, and all commissioned officers in counties under the control of William should retain their lands or be restored to them, if they made their submission to the new Government. This provision, it was calculated, would save far more than 3000 owners their estates; but, like the other civil provisions, it was set at naught on a pretext flimsy alike and false, by the shameless Parliament of the conquering Protestant settlers, which before long was assembled in Dublin. William gave his assent to this cruel breach of faith; his conduct certainly deserves blame, but very probably he could not help himself; he was overborne by the greedy fanatics he had made supreme at the castle. For he was a great statesman with enlightened views; I have been told that, even before Aghrim, he had offered honourable terms to our army, though against him in the field, and to all who held the Catholic faith in Ireland.

On the 6th of October 1691, our whole forces, perhaps 15,000 strong, marched out of Limerick under arms, and with their standards flying. Hundreds of the soldiers were in rags and unshod; but all bore themselves well, and had a dauntless aspect. It had been agreed that the men who were to take service in France were to defile beyond an appointed spot; those who were willing to remain were to turn away. The choice of the immense majority was soon seen; some 11,000 passed beyond the selected point; some 2000 went quietly to their homes. Scarcely 1000 threw in their lot with

Ginkle. Sarsfield looked on with pride at the spectacle exhibiting the noble spirit of our race. "These men," he said, "are leaving all that is most dear in life for a strange land, in which they will have to endure much, to serve in an army that hardly knows our people; but they are true to Ireland and have still hopes for her cause; we will make another Ireland in the armies of the great King of France." The transports from Limerick were soon under way; loud wailing was heard from the adjoining shores as the departing sails glided down the Shannon; a few of the soldiery on board escaped by swimming, but nearly all remained faithful to their heroic choice. Some regiments, however, had to march a long distance to Cork; I was in the company of Sarsfield with these; the temptation was too strong for some failing hearts; hundreds deserted and were never seen again. A woeful sight was seen on the Lee when the transports set sail; Sarsfield had promised the exiles who had embarked that their families were to go with them to France; there was no room in the ships to enable the pledge to be fulfilled. Loud cries and lamentation broke from the wives and children who had been left behind; some dashed into the stream and perished in its depths; some clung to the boats that were making off from the shore; many of the men, husbands or fathers, plunged into the waters; not a few lost their lives in their efforts to reach the dry ground. Nevertheless the mass of our army arrived in safety in France; they were to form the rearguard of the renowned warriors, ever and everywhere true to the flag of the lilies, who, whether in good or evil fortune, were to make the name of the Irish Brigade famous, and to win lasting honour for our ill-fated race. I should add here that M. de Bacquancourt, the prisoner I had made at the Boyne, had kept faith-

fully the parole he had given; but had been exchanged for one of our officers long before this time; he bade me farewell as I set forth from Limerick. "Strange is our lot," he said. "Would that I could return to France, and you are mourning because you will behold her shores; but we shall remain friends, whatever fate has in store for us. I have a brother in Normandy who holds the ancient faith, and several kinsmen in the Low Countries; they will be kind to you if it were only for my sake." I felt comforted by this true-hearted message, it was to lead to eventful passages, I have said, in my career.

## CHAPTER IV

BEFORE embarking for France I had a curiosity to see the scenes of the late operations at Cork, and examined them with my chief, Sarsfield. Cork is not nearly as large a place as Limerick; it is a fortified town of no great extent, built by the Norman and English colonists to keep out the Irishry; its mean streets and lanes spread over swampy flats; though admirably suited to trade, it owes little to it. We visited spots where the besiegers had made breaches in the walls, and saw the place where Grafton, a royal bastard, had fallen; there was much that bore witness to Marlborough's activity and resource. A story about the general—throughout his career he has had a fascinating power over the minds of men—was in the mouths of many Irish officers. Turenne had abolished in the army of France the bad practice of alternate commands on successive days, but this still continued in the German armies; the Duke of Wurtemberg, a colleague of Marlborough, was with difficulty won over to accept this arrangement; he had at first insisted on having the supreme command, and probably in that event Cork would not have fallen. Our transports dropped slowly down the stream of the Lee, its shores stretching in desolate plains for miles. We had reached ere long a magnificent roadstead, capable of being a haven for many scores of warships, but now with hardly a fisher's skiff on its waters. We were soon on the

rolling Atlantic waves; I had never beheld the open sea before; with most of my comrades I sank in a state of misery; sea sickness, in a word, took possession of us; for some days we even forgot our country and her woes. The nauseous prostration, however, soon passed away. Borne along by a steady and favourable wind, we had a glimpse of the verge of the western coast of England, still the land of a race akin in blood to our own; from thence we stood across the mouth of the English Channel for France. By this time I was able to notice from deck whatever of interest we met; what struck me most were the swarms of merchant shipping, under the flags of England and of the United Dutch States, which were bearing to and fro the products of many lands in the pursuits of commerce. These were the trading fleets which Tourville more than once destroyed, to the consternation of Amsterdam and London, and of which Jean Bart and Duguay-Trouin often made havoc; but they were an immense element of national power, and formed a mainstay of the allies in their struggle with the great king. Our transports could not have escaped the enemy's cruisers had they not had what may be called safe conducts; signals from the mastheads showed that that they were free to make the voyage. After a navigation of eight or ten days from Cork we reached a great bay between two headlands; and after threading a narrow passage cast anchor in the noble harbour of Brest, our ships gradually coming in one after the other.

The main body of our army, which had embarked at Limerick, reached Brest about the same time as our smaller contingent. All these troops were formed into regiments and brigades, were supplied with whatever was needed to appear in the field, and were marched to the different theatres of war, ex-

tending from the Northern to the Mediterranean Seas. France was encompassed by hosts of enemies on every side; she had William and the Dutch in great force in the Low Countries; the armies of Austria and the Empire hung on her Rhenish frontier; the Duke of Savoy was menacing her southern provinces; Spain was watching an opportunity to strike her from the heights of the Pyrenees. Yet she had heroically more than held her own; beside Luxemburg's splendid success at Fleurus, Louis XIV. had just captured the great stronghold of Mons, and this had opened a way to the chief town of Brussels. The Irish auxiliaries, who now entered her service, had been greatly undervalued by French officers, and, indeed, were wanting in the training that makes real soldiers; but nature had made them more powerful men than the French, and when they had been properly disciplined for war, they soon gave proof of extraordinary military worth. It was my good fortune to be enrolled in the two troops of guards, supposed to correspond to the Maison du Roi, and to be the household soldiery of the fallen King of England; one troop was placed under the command of Berwick, the other under that of my noble chief, Sarsfield. For some unknown reason we were kept at Brest, perhaps because there had already been rumours of a descent on England; we were settled in cantonments around the great seaport. I must say I was treated from the first with kindness by my French companions in arms; no other nation has such sympathy with brave men of a different race; France has always had large contingents of foreign soldiers, and these have done her admirable service in the field. At Brest I had ample leisure to go over and to wonder at this mighty naval fortress, and to become acquainted with its immense resources for war at sea. The approaches

to the inner roadstead were armed with batteries, which made an enemy's attack well-nigh impossible; within the roadstead there was always a great fleet of warships. I gazed with astonishment at those mighty hulls, with their towering masts and their grim tiers of cannon; at those graceful frigates, the coursers of the deep; and especially at those long and rapidly-moving galleys, propelled by the oars of unhappy slaves, and intended to effect a landing on the enemy's coasts. I heard much at this time of the extraordinary activity which had been displayed in the preparation of the fleet; the names of Colbert and Seignelay, the creators of this young navy, were singled out for praise. Indeed, I was actually told, what I do not believe, that a frigate had been built and furnished with a crew within less than a week. The French sailors at this time were in the highest heart; they were full of their late victory of Beachy Head; they used to boast that the English and Dutch were not their equals in fair fight and, above all, in boarding.

After remaining in our quarters some months at Brest, we received orders to march into Normandy in the spring of 1692. We made our way, with a fresh contingent, along the great paved roads which, even in that nook of the kingdom, connected the provinces with the capital; we had soon reached the coasts of the peninsula, called the Cotentin, which projects, like a huge headland, in the channel between France and England. We found a large army encamped along the seaboard, from Cherbourg —soon to become a great naval arsenal—round the point of Barfleur to the Cape of La Hogue; it was composed partly of French troops and of a few Scotch auxiliaries; and there was a considerable body of the brave men who had fought at Limerick. These forces were commanded by Marshal Belle-

fonds, another of the chiefs who had been called the small change of Turenne; he was a gallant but not a capable soldier; this was to be made but too manifest in the events that followed. The object of these preparations was to effect a descent on England; to be supported by an immense French fleet; James II. was to lead the expedition in person; its success was to restore the House of Stuart to the throne. Events in England seemed to befriend the enterprise, though we knew little about them in our camps; I suspect they were ill understood at Versailles and St Germains. The causes that had made the throne of William insecure had apparently been increasing in strength; the defeat of Beachy Head and the capture of Mons had filled the navy and the army with discontent, and had even turned a great part of the nation against him. Besides, his Government, still composed of men of different factions, was divided against itself and weak; he was more unpopular than he had ever been; he lent his ear more than ever, it was said, to Dutch favourites. The gravest dangers, however, which beset William were to be found in the treasons that prevailed even in his intimate councils. Some of his ministers, it is now known, fearing that a counter revolution was at hand, were in close correspondence with St Germains; they professed themselves ready to declare for their old master. The leading spirit of these conspiracies was, beyond dispute, Marlborough, though the full extent of his guilt has probably not transpired. But he was the most distinguished soldier in the English army; his influence over the officers and men was great; he had already acquired high military renown; he certainly disliked Dutch generals placed over his head; and with his wife he was the absolute master of the Princess Anne, the next heir to the crown, after a childless pair. If he

owed much to William, his interests were not those of William, and this was enough to determine his purpose.

A great, if not an inglorious, disaster was, ere long, to befall the arms of France. I heard the tale from more than one eye-witness. I beheld the worst, perhaps, of these incidents myself. Tourville was to set sail with a great fleet from Brest; he was to be joined by D'Estrées, with squadrons of Rochfort and Toulon. This huge armament was to attack the English and Dutch fleets, supposed to be very inferior in force, and Tourville, after the enemy's defeat, was to ferry the invaders across the Channel. But D'Estrées was detained by contrary winds; he never effected his junction with his chief. In the last days of May 1692, Tourville, with a fleet of little more than forty warships, found himself not far from the headland of Barfleur, in the presence of the enemy's combined fleet, twofold, at the very least, in numbers. The admiral had received positive orders to give battle. He obeyed in an evil hour for his renown. It should be said for him, that he had some reason to believe that part of the English fleet would declare for King James, and that the Dutch would not heartily support their allies. These expectations proved quite vain. The Dutch squadron, indeed, rather hung back; but the English seamen, burning to avenge the defeat of Beachy Head, thought only of bringing their enemy to bay, and fell on Tourville with characteristic boldness and courage. A fierce and well-contested engagement followed. Tourville and his crews gave proof of heroic valour. At the close of the day, immense as was the disparity of force, the allies had gained no decided advantage. It was impossible, however, to renew the unequal fight. The chief part of the French fleet, making its way through the perilous Race of Alderney

found a refuge under the guns of St Malo ; three ships betook themselves to the waters of Cherbourg, and twelve cast anchor in the Bay of La Hogue, protected by two forts of no great strength, but almost in the presence of a large part of our army. Tourville was in command of this detachment, which had suffered terribly in the battle of only three days before. I have heard that his intention was to run the vessels aground, to save the crews, and to make a fight from the shore should the enemy attempt to make a landing. Bellefonds, however, rejected this, the only prudent course. Meanwhile, the victorious English and Dutch, bearing down in irresistible force, had soon sent off scores of armed boats from their ships, the guns of which commanded the bay, and had soon silenced the weak forts before them. The assailants in the boats, assisted by fireships, quickly overpowered a feeble resistance ; not a man from our army took part in the defence. The doomed twelve ships were set on fire and destroyed. The three ships at Cherbourg met the same fate ; one of these was the magnificent *Royal Sun*, believed to be the finest warship afloat.

I have never understood why our army did nothing on this day. It certainly might have given the ships assistance with its guns ; but Bellefonds left Tourville completely in the lurch. French generals and admirals have seldom worked well together. But even if we had made a landing on the shores of England, the expedition would have assuredly failed. Our army was not more than 40,000 men ; divided though it was into hostile factions, the nation would have risen against the invaders to a man. There had, indeed, already been proof of this : Tourville, after his victory at Beachy Head, had bombarded a little port called Teignmouth, and had disembarked some hundreds of armed men ; but all

Devonshire and Cornwall rushed to arms. He was soon glad to be under sail in the Channel. It is remarkable that, though one of the Bodyguards of James, I did not see the fallen king during these events: as usual, he kept aloof from his soldiers. He was soon off to St Germains to lament among women and priests. We were, in a short time, marched out from the camps we had held; but, meanwhile, tidings had reached me of the state of Ireland, and of the fortunes of our family, now without its head. It was the hour of the triumph of the Saxon colonists. They were relentlessly turning the occasion to account. The Parliament, wholly composed of the Protestant caste, had scattered the pledges of the Treaty of Limerick to the winds. Very few within its protection saved an acre of their lands; proscription and confiscation were ruthlessly enforced; the vanquished people groaned under the oppressors' yoke. William, even if he had wished it, did not dare to interfere. I was informed of what had taken place in Offaly, and of what had befallen my nearest kindred, by one of our clansmen who had taken service in a French *corsair*, and happened to meet me while I was still at Normandy. Our scanty possessions had been forfeited; an Inquisition, as it was called, had pronounced the O'Connors rebels; my brother Maurice, my mother and sisters—my grandmother had died before the late war—were banished from the last home of the Offaly princes in their own land. Yet I wish to do justice even to the men of the conquering race; the few hundred acres, that had remained to us, were bought by the descendent of a Cromwellian settler, of the name of Maurice Stack, who had compassion on a house fallen from its high estate; these were honourably held on a secret trust, for my brother, for years. My brother, too, had to thank a lawyer of the town

of Birr, called Paul Dane, for the loan of a sum of £100; with this little pittance he went to England to seek his fortunes.[1] As for my mother and sisters, they found a refuge among the O'Connors of Kerry, a branch of the widespread noble stock. The name of Offaly was not unknown even in that distant region, perhaps through the traditions of the Desmond war. They dedicated themselves to the Church and entered religion.

Before our army had broken up from its camps, we heard that the conspiracy against the usurper had failed, and that Marlborough had been disgraced and dismissed from the posts he held in the State. The causes of this sudden turn of fortune are not well known; but if we bear in mind that, in after years, Anne Stuart was a mere creature of Marlborough and his wife, and that he was well-nigh supreme in England for a time, it is not improbable but that, at this conjuncture, he was plotting to get rid of William, and to place Anne on the throne; this scheme was suspected at least by Sarsfield. My troop marched from Normandy to the banks of the Loire, and after passing through the beautiful land of the Beauce, was placed in cantonments for some months at Orleans. I was enchanted at the scenes I beheld, unlike anything I had seen before; the rich woodlands, the cultivated plains, the populous towns, the noble castles rising along the fertile valley of the Loire, the ancient civilisation and wealth that met the eye everywhere, were very different from the misery and desolation of the Irish landscape. Yet I was informed that even this region had been more flourishing; the peasantry in many places had a poor and abject look; the Huguenot migration had done much harm. Indeed, Vauban, illustrious in

[1] My kinsman is correct in these statements. I have memoranda relating to Maurice Stack and Paul Dane.

peace as in war, had, I have heard, already warned the great king that incessant wars were weighing heavily on France. From Orleans we were marched to St Germains. I had my first glimpse of the great city of Paris, its steeples and towers rising out of masses of roofs, at a distance; but we hardly remained a week at the palace. Orders came that we were to advance to the frontier of the north. It was now the early spring of 1693; preparations were being made for another invasion of the Netherlands, which it was hoped would have decisive results. The year before, Louis XIV. had taken the field in person, near the time of the disaster of La Hogue, had sat down before the great fortress of Namur, at the confluence of the Meuse and Sambre, and, despite all the efforts of William to relieve the place, and the skill of the famous engineer, Cohorn, had captured Namur, after a memorable siege, in which Vauban almost surpassed himself. This was a glorious sequel to the fall of Mons; immense forces were now being arrayed and moved from all parts of France to her northern borders; it was hoped that Brussels, at least, would be the prize of the campaign. We made a halt for a few weeks at Cambray. I saw for the first time that region of low hills, plains, thickets and numerous streams, bristling with strongholds, in every direction, which had been a theatre of the exploits of Turenne and Condé, and was to be the theatre of still greater exploits.

At Cambray I happened to meet a personage who may be said to have shaped my subsequent career in arms. Villars, then only a brilliant cavalry chief, had had a command in the Low Countries; he was on his way to take a command on the Rhine; I was presented to him by Sarsfield, with whom he had long been acquainted. Villars was at this time in

the prime of manhood; he had already made a name for himself in the field, and even in the arts of diplomacy, but his genius in war had not been fully displayed. While still a boy he had flung himself into the breach at the great siege of Maastricht, where, strange to say, Marlborough distinguished himself likewise; he had given proof of heroic daring at several other sieges, incurring the blame of more than one superior, for his place was in the ranks of the cavalry. He had been highly praised by Condé on the day of Seneffe for rightly interpreting one of the enemy's movements when the staff of Condé were, to a man, at fault; he had disapproved of the reckless obstinacy of the prince in attacking his adversary in his last very strong position. Some years afterwards he was despatched by Louis XIV. to watch the progress of the struggle between the emperor and the Turk; he was an eye-witness of the great battle of Mohacz; he had urged the Austrian commanders to strike one of the bold strokes which led to the utter defeat of the Ottoman hordes. Having acquired the esteem of the imperial chiefs—Eugene of Savoy was one of his friends through life—Villars was next sent to Vienna, with a charge to report on the policy of the Austrian Government; he did much by his adroitness and skill to detach the Elector of Bavaria from the Emperor Leopold and to make him an ally of Louis XIV., conduct which in subsequent years had important results in the calamitous war of the Spanish Succession. He met Marlborough again in 1689, and covered the retreat at the skirmish near Walcourt, a hamlet not far from the town of Charleroy; this was the scene of Marlborough's first essay in superior command on the Continent; as is well known, he exhibited his characteristic skill. In the campaigns of 1690 and 1691 Villars was, for the most part, on the frontier of the

Rhine serving under a commonplace chief, Lorges, a nephew, but a degenerate nephew, of Turenne; in 1692 he witnessed the prowess of a body of the brave horsemen who had entered the service of France after the fall of Limerick, a circumstance that told in an Irish exile's favour. He treated me with great courtesy as a friend of Sarsfield, spoke a good deal about the war in Ireland, and pointedly remarked that the conditions we had obtained at Limerick were honourable to our army in the highest degree and proved that the enemy must have been in trouble.[1] This was the beginning of an acquaintance that became close and intimate; it may be said to have been the making of my fortunes when a soldier of France.

Meanwhile the French army was advancing in enormous force along the space between Landreçy and Lille by the roads that lead into the province of Hainault. We were among the last troops that broke up from our camp; I witnessed the march of a large part of the invading host; it was a heart-stirring and magnificent spectacle. The eye followed the movement of the armed masses for miles as in orderly and imposing arrays they rolled slowly on their way to the frontier. I was enchanted with the bearing of the famous Maison du Roi, especially of the Grey and the Black Musketeers, so called from the colour of their chargers; these choice troops were composed of the youth of the *noblesse* of France, and had the look of men who carried victory at the point of their swords. I admired, too, the French and Swiss Guards, picked soldiers chosen for the

[1] Villars's *Mémoires*, I., p. 141, the genuine Vogué edition, fully confirms my kinsman's statement:—"Les articles de la capitulation sont si singuliers qu'il n'y en a peut-être point d'example dans l'histoire. Ils paroissent moins des conditions accordées par le vainqueur à une ville qui se rend, que celles qu'elle se prescrit à elle-même, et qu'elle force l'ennemi d'accepter."

king's household, and the infantry of some of the "old" regiments, "Navarre," "Picardy," "Piement," and "Champagne," so named because they had been embodied for more than two hundred years; the "Petits Vieux," also, were veterans of excellent quality. As for the rest of the infantry, it had a less perfect aspect, but it numbered tens of thousands of men; and the dragoons, with their small, active horses and their long pieces, and the heavy cavalry with their carbines and great swords, were men who had gained renown on many a stricken field. The artillery, though much the best in Europe, was not what it has since become; the guns were comparatively few in numbers; they were usually drawn by oxen and were slowly moved; the trains were cumbrous and greatly delayed a march. The army had discarded the obsolete match-lock, and pikemen had almost disappeared from the ranks; the infantry had a greatly-improved musket, and were armed with the bayonet, a recent invention; and though this weapon was not as formidable as it became afterwards, it had greatly increased the efficiency of the footmen; it made the regiments appear like a forest of steel at a distance. Yet this army was not without defects; old soldiers muttered that it had not the discipline of their "Father Turenne"; it was overburdened by *impedimenta* of many kinds, to use the expressive language of Rome; hundreds of carriages, spare horses, and sutlers followed the lines of march; the troops were petulant, licentious, full of reckless confidence, like men who had scarcely ever known defeat. What struck me most, however, was that the king and his Court, accompanied by a gorgeous staff and by a bevy of the fairest dames of Versailles, were actually in the train of the army. The long procession of gilded coaches, the multitude of horses and sumpter mules, the waggons furnished with all

that could minister to fastidious luxury, formed, doubtless, a splendid if strange sight, but they greatly retarded operations in the field. I was reminded of what I had learnt from Father Nicholas, how an army of the East, glittering in half-barbaric pomp and dragging with it a crowd of useless attendants, was very different from the trained and quickly-moving legions of Rome.

The royal army, retarded by the delays of the Court, had not come into line with another army commanded by the renowned Luxemburg, until the first days of June 1693. The king had left the "Ladies," as they were called, behind at Namur; the combined forces were not less than 120,000 men; they were assembled in the open country around Gembloux, a village not far from the celebrated field of Fleurus. I saw Luxemburg on this occasion for the first time, as he rode at the head of his splendid staff; he was a little withered hunchback, well stricken in years; but, spite of his deformities, with the look and the glance of a warrior. Though far inferior to Turenne in making the great movements of war, and perhaps to Condé in the actual shock of battle, he was the foremost general of an age of generals of the second order; his military reputation was already immense. He had been under a cloud for some years at Court, and was disliked by Louvois, the great war minister; but his genius had overcome these obstacles; he was recognised as the most able soldier in Europe. He had won the victory of Fleurus by a fine exhibition of what was then known as the "new tactics," due in some measure to the increase in the size of armies; and if he had been surprised by William at Steenkirke, he had discomfited his adversary in a hard-fought battle, in which he had displayed extraordinary tenacity and resource. Expectation was on tiptoe in our camps

around Gembloux; from the highest in command to the humblest soldier, it was believed that decisive events were at hand. At this moment our united armies were not more than three marches from Brussels or Liège; William had not nearly assembled his forces, and had not more than 50,000 men around him, stationed in an encampment near Louvain; had the king and Luxemburg fallen on their much weaker enemy, they must have routed him, and have had the Netherlands in their grasp. Luxemburg, it is said, implored his master to make a movement of which the success was certain; William, it is now known, was convinced that he could hardly make his escape. But in an evil hour for the glories of his reign, Louis refused to follow his lieutenant's advice; he sent off a large part of his forces to the Rhine, where they could not be of much real use; ere long he had returned with the Court to Versailles. Different reasons have been given for this strange conduct; it has been said that the king, though a brave man, disliked all operations in war but sieges, and was averse to running the risk of battles in the field; it was not forgotten that seventeen years before, he had taken the same false course in the presence of the same enemy. Despite the divinity that hedged him round, the greatest indignation prevailed in our camps; generals, officers and soldiers were of one mind; the sarcasms of the young *noblesse* were bitter; frightful libels were published in Paris and could not be repressed; but not improbably Louis felt the stings of conscience: he never commanded an army again.

The army of Luxemburg was about 80,000 strong, after the detachment had been sent off to the Rhine. The army of William soon became more numerous; he might have ventured to offer battle; but he was not a great commander, though a heroic soldier. Some

weeks were spent in manœuvres to little purpose, but here Luxemburg gained a distinct advantage. The French chief held a position between Brussels and Liège, threatening both places at the same time; William sent a considerable force to overrun French Flanders, hoping by these means to draw the enemy off from his front. But Luxemburg was not deceived by demonstrations of this kind, which had only the result of dividing the hostile army; he suddenly pounced down on the little fortress of Huy, which fell after a siege of a few days, and then marched with his main army as though he was about to attack Liège. William had just time to throw some thousands of men into the place, thus further weakening his forces in hand; he then hastily retreated towards his camps near Louvain; he had not more than 50,000 troops under his immediate command. His antagonist saw and seized the occasion; he pursued with a largely superior force; on the 28th of July 1693, he came within striking distance of his foe, whom he found ready to accept battle. William might have fallen back behind the Gheete, a deep stream which would have formed a strong obstacle; but he chose to take a position in front of the Gheete, where he hoped to repel the enemy's onslaught. This position was one of great natural strength; it had been fortified, in a short time, with remarkable skill; to some generals it would have appeared impregnable. William's left rested on the hamlet of Landen, beside a little feeder of the Gheete; a ravine covered his front on that side, and presented an obstacle that seemed to defy attack. His right held the hamlet of Neerwinden, more accessible, but very difficult to storm; between the two villages extended a strip of rising ground, along which a breastwork had been hastily thrown up, and was armed with many pieces of cannon.

The two hamlets were strong points of defence in themselves; the houses built of stone, and the numerous enclosures, were not easy to master; but they had been strengthened by all the means available to the art of the engineer; William's army was well screened from the enemy's sight, especially along the line of the breastwork; behind this the men were almost concealed, and it commanded the ground on which the French must advance. The position was notably adapted to resist the onset of that most formidable arm, the renowned French cavalry.

In the early morning of the 29th of July the enemy began a desultory cannonade, perhaps in order to try the range of his guns; this was not, Sarsfield told me, a judicious effort. Meanwhile Luxemburg had carefully reconnoitred the ground. I can see him as he surveyed the scene with his field-glass and gave his orders to lieutenants, their plumed hats doffed in his presence. He rightly judged that it was impossible to force the position at Landen; here he confined himself to a false attack, but this held the enemy's left wing fast; William did not venture to detach any troops from it—very different from what took place at Ramillies. Our men fell furiously on the right wing and the centre of the hostile army; under the protection of their guns they made desperate efforts to storm Neerwinden and to force the breastwork; the battle raged for some hours with doubtful results. The struggle, however, was here unequal—inferior as the enemy was in numbers, the strength of his position was such that he made a successful stand; the batteries along the breastwork wrought immense havoc; we could not get at the defenders behind the obstacle; the troops in Neerwinden, holding the fortified village, were almost beyond the reach of attack; they smote our infantry as it

advanced with a most destructive fire. We had not gained an inch of ground by the end of noon; but Luxemburg, daring and tenacious, like Condé in the field, persisted in renewing the incessant onslaught; Neerwinden, he had seen, was the key of William's position; he continued to launch thousands of men against it. Meanwhile he made a large part of our cavalry advance to close the interval between his right and his centre, which had already suffered terrible loss. I was, with Sarsfield, in the line of these brave horsemen; they remained under the fire of the breastwork for at least two hours, unable to strike a single blow, but steadily closing up their shattered ranks. William, I have since heard, broke out into an exclamation of praise. The afternoon was now partly spent when Luxemburg made another great effort to carry Neerwinden and to storm the breastwork; but this also completely failed, the approaches to both were strewn with our dying and our dead. There were signs of wavering in parts of our army; many officers began to whisper retreat, but our great captain would not confess he was beaten; his boldness and endurance were rewarded at last by victory. The French and Swiss Guards were sent forward to make a supreme effort; after a fierce conflict they broke into Neerwinden and drove their enemies, fighting to the last, out of this point of vantage, they then levelled a part of the adjoining breastwork, this gave room for our cavalry to advance. The Maison du Roi, led by Princes of the Blood, and followed by a torrent of exulting horsemen, rushed furiously through the gap that had been opened for them; they were checked for a moment by a body of English cavalry, but nothing could stand against that irresistible onset. The right wing of the enemy had now been turned and forced, and a detachment of our horsemen fell

upon his rear as his army was beginning to draw off from the field.

Before five in the afternoon victory had been declared for our army along the whole enemy's line. His right wing, driven out of Neerwinden, broke up in confusion, and was scattered in fragments, hundreds of the fugitives perished in the waters of the Gheete. The left wing, covered by the ravine in its front, suffered less, and made good its way out of Landen; but the army of William was rent in twain; it separated in widely-diverging retreat. I recall to my mind the stirring scenes of the close of our triumph; how Luxemburg, scarcely able to sit his charger, urged the pursuit with vehement and impassioned gestures; how Bourbon, Condé and the young Duke of Chartres were foremost in the ranks of the Maison du Roi; how the rush of our soldiery was like the sweep of the tempest. Yet the enemy savagely struggled to the last; regiment after regiment endeavoured to make a stand. Amidst the smoke and the dust of the fight I could just descry the figures of William and his staff trying to rally and reform his beaten troops. The carnage of the blood-stained field was prodigious; scores of distinguished officers had fallen or had been made prisoners, Neerwinden especially was choked with corpses; the breastwork presented an appalling spectacle. I never beheld such a scene until I witnessed Malplaquet; but here the parts were happily reversed; it is difficult to understand how, in either battle, the formidable defences were at last carried. As I was walking over the field a message from Sarsfield reached me, he had been wounded to death in one of our last charges; he sent an aide-de-camp to call me to his side. The noble form of the hero lay on a pallet in a hut; he feebly lifted up his nerveless hand and gave me a letter, which he had

dictated, in my behalf, to Villars. "I am dying," he said, "the most glorious of deaths; we have seen the backs of the tyrants of our race. May you, Gerald, live to behold other such days; but let Ireland be always uppermost in your thoughts." In a few hours the warrior was no more. He was buried with military pomp where he fell; Luxemburg and the Princes of the Blood were present; the survivors of his troop shed many a manly tear. It is unnecessary to retrace the later incidents of the campaign. Luxemburg did not advance on Louvain or Brussels; his army, no doubt, had terribly suffered; but it remained for weeks in complete inaction. For this he has been severely blamed; but admirable as he was on the field of battle, he was never great in reaping the fruits of victory. Meanwhile William had made excellent use of what was, perhaps, a respite; his army was as formidable as ever before long; he was always indomitable in adverse fortune. Louis XIV. gracefully expressed the opinion of Versailles: "Luxemburg in the battle was the Grand Condé; after the battle, the Prince of Orange was Turenne."

While our army was in cantonments after Neerwinden, I was sent off with a detachment to join the army on the Rhine. The king had placed this under the nominal command of the Dauphin, Lorges, nevertheless, being the real chief. It was perhaps to increase this force, for the behoof of the heir to the crown of France, that the unfortunate separation of the armies in the Low Countries had been made. I marched by the great stronghold of Luxemburg to Strasbourg, once a free imperial city, but recently added to the territory of France, and thence made my way into the lands of Wurtemberg, a principal theatre of the exploits of Turenne. I beheld some of the devastation that had been wrought of late years in the Palatinate, as it was called near the

Rhine. Towns and villages were charred and deserted ruins. The country over leagues was a desolate waste; the abodes of the peasantry and woodlands had almost disappeared. I heard tales, too, of the horrible sack of Heidelberg, an ancient and princely city beside the Neckar. This was a scene of cruelty worthy of the Huns of Attila. Villars was in chief command of the cavalry; he read Sarsfield's letter, and gave me a hearty welcome. In a few days he had found me a place on his staff. Much had been expected from the Dauphin's army; already it was in the heart of Germany. It was hoped that it would defeat Prince Louis of Baden and reach the Danube. But the vices I had already detected in French troops were at their very worst in this army. The Dauphin and Lorges had no authority over their men. Whole regiments abandoned themselves to pillage; want of discipline and disorder prevailed everywhere.[1] The severest examples were made to little purpose. The army did nothing in this campaign; in fact the Dauphin, like his son, the unfortunate Duke of Burgundy, had not the slightest aptitude for war, and Lorges was little more than a soldier of the Court. Villars was soon afterwards recalled into France. I was sent with a body of horsemen to take part in the conflict on the Italian frontier. We marched through Franche Comté, lately a province of Spain, and reached before long the great mountainous region, which forms the chief part of the lands of Dauphiné. I beheld, for the first time, the giant heights of the Alps; the precipitous cliffs, the narrow valleys and defiles, the torrents rolling down the masses of rock, made a profound impression on eyes that had only gazed on the low hills of Ireland. We crossed the mighty barrier

[1] *See* Villars's *Mémoires*, the Vogué edition, I., p. 161.

by the Pass of Mont Cenis, at this season free from the snows of winter. We joined the main army in its camps at Fenestrelle, a few marches from Turin, the chief town of Piedmont. Its commander was Catinat, a very able man, a not unworthy successor of Turenne, who had won his marshal's staff by his unaided merit. He had with a very inferior force conducted an admirable campaign against the Duke of Savoy. He had now to prove that he was a master of his art. The duke had laid siege to the fortress of Pignerol. Catinat, descending from his camp by a forced march, compelled his adversary to raise the siege, and to accept battle to cover Turin. The fight took place at Marsaglia, a small town between two petty rivers. I was not present on the field myself, but Catinat won a complete victory. At Marsaglia our Irish soldiery did great things; a body of Huguenots in the enemy's ranks was simply cut to pieces.

During the next two years I was with Villars on the Rhine. Lorges did nothing against the Prince of Baden, the best of the German generals of that day. My chief was vexed by these feeble movements. "How different it would have been," he often said, "had we had Condé or Turenne." He was, however, only in command of the cavalry. Louvois, the Minister of War, had a grudge against him. The king as yet took little heed of his counsels. Events of grave importance occurred on other theatres of war. I heard of these, though I had no part in them. Our fleets, and notably our fast-sailing *corsairs*, had wrought immense havoc to the enemy's commerce; in return the English and Dutch had laid some of our coast towns in ashes. In 1694 a great expedition was fitted out against Brest, but by some means that has never been

ascertained the king got wind of the projected enterprise. Vauban hastened to strengthen the defences of the place. Huge rafts, armed with cannon, were moored in the inner roadstead; the batteries in the channel to the sea were increased; the warships in port were made ready for action, thousands of troops were assembled to prevent a landing. The enemy threw some boats ashore in the little Bay of Camaret, and disembarked some hundreds of men, but the assailants were crushed by an overwhelming fire; their commander, a good soldier, Talmash, was slain; the squadron outside Brest made under all sail to sea. It was an admirably planned and very brilliant exploit. The battery which struck Talmash down is still known as "the Englishman's death." But in the Netherlands a reverse befell the arms of France, which ought to have been a real and certain triumph. Luxemburg had died at the close of 1694; his successor was Villeroy, a playmate of the king in youth. He was utterly unfit for high command. France, but for him, would not have mourned for Ramillies. William by the spring of 1695 was at the head of an army perhaps equal to the numbers of that of Villeroy; he soon showed that he knew he had not to deal with Luxemburg. He divided his forces within reach of his enemy, a movement that would have been fatal before Turenne; and, leaving Vaudemont to hold Villeroy in check, he rapidly marched to besiege Namur, the great prize of the campaign of 1692. Villeroy, who was largely superior to Vaudemont in force, lost an opportunity to rout him in the Lys, and then, instead of marching to the relief of Namur, he contented himself with bombarding Brussels, as if this would compel William to abandon the siege. Meanwhile Boufflers, an excellent and true-hearted soldier, had entered Namur

and undertaken the defence of the place, but though the garrison made a heroic resistance, and successfully repelled more than one assault, the town, and sometime afterwards the citadel, fell. A grand opportunity had been lost to Villeroy. The campaign in the Netherlands had turned out badly for the first time in this war.

In 1696 I accompanied Villars to the war in Italy. The Duke of Savoy had become an ally of Louis XIV.; our army laid siege to Valenza on the Po. The defection of the duke, in fact, broke up the League of Europe; peace was made at Ryswick in 1697. France had successfully resisted a mighty host of enemies; she had won great victories on land and at sea; she had made important conquests in the Low Countries; she had overrun a large part of Spain. But the nation had been exhausted by its gigantic efforts; the harvests of the last few years had been bad and had reduced many provinces to great poverty; grass grew in the streets of some of the chief maritime towns; commerce and industry were well-nigh in suspense. All classes, especially the humble peasantry, were groaning under the load of taxation carried beyond limits scarcely possible to endure; much the same as had taken place in Ireland, the value of money had been artificially changed. Even the splendour of the Court had grown dim; in every town and village, and throughout whole districts there were lamentable signs of extreme distress; though sternly kept down, discontent abounded. England, on the other hand, the most formidable enemy of France, had greatly increased in power, and had become more prosperous. Despite a succession of plots and treason in the State, the throne of William had gradually become more secure; he had lately allied himself with the Whig party; La Hogue and Namur had done much for

him; the settlement of the revolution seemed destined to last. England had acquired a marked ascendency on the seas; her fleets, resting on the strength of a maritime nation, had become much more powerful than those of France, depending in the main on the will of a Government; her flag had become supreme in the Mediterranean of late years; her warships had almost saved Spain, and had crippled and ruined French foreign commerce. Her institutions, too, had been made more stable and sound; the Parliament was now supreme in the State, it had no longer a faction in the pay of the great king; it had voted sums to maintain the war which a short time before would have been deemed impossible to raise. The wealth of the nation, moreover, sustained by an immense trade, and by agriculture that received no check, had markedly grown even amidst a conflict which had strained the resources of all Europe; and curiously enough the money of the kingdom had been reformed, not practically debased as had been the case in France. Louis had a kind heart and felt for his people; proud and even victorious as he was, he wisely made peace in this position of affairs. He restored nearly all the conquests he had lately made; but retained the old imperial city of Strasbourg, a watch-tower so to speak, on the Rhine. The mighty contest which, for more than eight years, had raged with varying fortunes over the civilised world, was for the present brought to a close.

## CHAPTER V

OUR two troops of guards had cruelly suffered at Neerwinden, and in the other battles in the Low Countries. The troop to which I belonged, reduced to about a hundred men, was placed after the death of Sarsfield under the nominal command of Donagh, Earl of Clancarty, of the great tribe of the Red M'Carthy that spread over Cork and Kerry; its chiefs, I have said, were connected with the Offaly princes. The fortunes of Donagh are a pathetic tale; he had been wedded when a boy to a daughter of the Saxon house of Spencer, and having escaped to England to visit his wife in secret, he was denounced as a traitor by her unnatural brother, and nearly became a victim of the axe or the gibbet. William III., however, to do him justice, spared his life, and even bestowed on him a small pension—a poor pittance in return for his vast forfeited lands—he settled at Altona with the woman he loved, and never served in the armies of the great king. Berwick's troop, also less than a third of its regular numbers, remained in his hands for some months; I was presented to him by my kindly chief, Villars. The duke had not done much in the war in Ireland; but he had distinguished himself in the campaigns in the Netherlands, had fought like a hero at Neerwinden, and had been made a prisoner in one of the fierce cavalry *mêlées;* he was now deep in the councils of his royal father, and had been privy to one of the chief conspiracies that sought to restore

the House of Stuart to the throne. He invariably treated me with much courtesy, for his wife, fairest among the fair at St Germains, was a daughter of Sarsfield, his illustrious colleague; but he had not yet given proof of the great qualities which made him scarcely inferior to Marlborough, his famous uncle, in the field. During these months I had several opportunities to see the Palace of St Germains and its surroundings, and even to get glimpses of the household of the exiled king and queen. Nothing could be finer or more grand than the scene; the old château, enlarged by stately buildings, looks down from its noble terrace over an ancient forest, and the capital of France in the near distance; magnificent trees and streams add beauty to the enchanting prospect. Louis XIV. had made this the home of James and his consort; but the palace had rather the look of a monastery than of an abode of royalty. There was not a sign of the splendours of Versailles or Marly; no gatherings of lords and ladies in brilliant garb, no festivities, no trace of the pomp of a Court. A few English exiles were now and then to be seen, their countenances bearing the marks of discontent; a few soldiers formed a scanty guard of honour. But the antechambers of St Germains were usually filled with priests; and the great rooms had a sad and desolate aspect. I sometimes saw the queen—a proud but nobly-fashioned dame—and the little Prince of Wales, with his attendant nurses; two or three ladies sometimes had their walks on the terrace; but I never had sight of the discrowned king. He spent his time with his confessor, or with one or two of his old ministers; he seemed to avoid the sight of his Irish guards.

I had remained attached to the staff of Villars, though the war had come to an end at the peace of Ryswick. The future marshal was still only a

cavalry chief; and if his credit was rising at Versailles, he was poor compared to most of his companions-in-arms, and was then a lodger in an obscure house in Paris. I attended him at several of the great reviews of those days; I must say a word on one that was held at Compiègne, a marvellous spectacle. This grand pageant was given in honour of Boufflers, who had been made a marshal for his fine defence of Namur; it was a magnificent exhibition of the power and the glories of the great king. Sixty thousand of the choicest troops of France were assembled to take part in a mimic siege, and in the manœuvres of a great battle; the soldiers were radiant in gay and new uniforms; the officers were resplendent in the pomp of war: the eye gazed with rapture on the long and orderly lines of footmen, on the masses of horse, on the grim batteries of guns, all moved as if by clockwork at the word of the leaders in command. Yet even more striking, perhaps, was the appearance of the Court, which had journeyed from Versailles to be a witness of the scene. Superb tents, bright with many colours, had been laid out, I may say, for miles. Whole streets of dwellings, made of wood, and brilliantly decked out, had been constructed to receive the king and his most honoured guests, including ambassadors from every part of Europe. The concourse of all that was most noble and beautiful in France was immense; gay cavaliers on horseback, with troops of attendants; bevies of fine ladies in their coaches blazing with gold; pages, lackeys—in a word, all the retinue of a Court were gathered together in the plains round Compiègne; it was a carnival in honour of a reign as yet of triumphs, in war and in peace. The review lasted for several days; the king, an imposing and majestic figure, was sometimes to be seen in front of his

army, accompanied by princely and renowned warriors; he was still the royal sun of a devoted France; the acclaim that greeted him from the adjoining camps, was echoed far and near by the shouts of the peasantry, who had flocked in to behold a most wonderful sight. But the place of Louis was more often in the circle of his Court; he would sometimes stand beside the chair of Maintenon, his wife, and, save in name, his consort and queen; and he would say gay things to the childish Duchess of Burgundy, that flower of Savoy, already full of charm and grace, and wedded to his grandson, the hope of the monarchy; or he would exchange words with the nobles, the envoys, the princes, who hung on his lips; always affable and gracious, he looked every inch their master. I was told all this at different times by Villars; I had as yet only seen the Court from a distance. But the great review made a profound impression on my mind; it was the most splendid and one of the last of a reign on which disasters were before long to gather.

In these days I devoted my hours of leisure to exploring the vast and stirring world of Paris. I had seen fortresses and towns of France and the Netherlands; but these were mere villages compared to the great capital; accustomed as I had been to the sight of the poor towns of Ireland, I used to gaze with astonishment at these scenes of wonders. Paris is seated at the confluence of the Marne and the Seine, and is embosomed, to the north and south, in occasional hills; the Seine, as it flows to the sea, engirdles it in its folds; it is surrounded by a smiling country of woodland, forest and plain, through which prosperous suburbs were already spreading. The city, when I first saw it, had grown beyond the line of the ancient walls, half destroyed in the wars of the Fronde; it was, in fact, an open town ex-

panding in many directions. Vauban, I have heard, had wished to fortify it again; I have often thought of this while we were defending the entrenchments of Villars. The old *cité* is, so to speak, the kernel of Paris; from this islet of the Seine the towers of Nôtre Dame rise, and the fine pile of the Palace of Justice, the place where the renowned Parliament meets: a settlement of a petty tribe of Gauls has become a centre of the most brilliant life of Europe. Near the *cité* you see the noble Hôtel de Ville, where the chief burghers of the capital hold their assembly; at a short distance the eye rests on the magnificent colonnades of the Louvre, and on the Palace of the Tuileries, with its stately courts and gardens, all restored and embellished by Louis XIV., though the king has made Versailles the chief place of his State. Paris spreads out over an immense space from both sides of the Seine; the capital, at this time, had already the aspect of a great seat of riches, of power, of empire. The dome of the Invalides, a monument to the army of France, rose above a multitude of churches, palaces and fine public buildings; the frowning towers of the Bastille were an image of the feudal age; the boulevards, as they were called, constructed outside the old walls, the superb hotels of the higher *noblesse*, still surrounded by rich *parterres* and enclosures, the arches of triumph that told the tale of victory; the market-places, the squares, the bridges on the Seine, bore witness to the grandeur of a monarchy unrivalled since the best days of Rome. Paris, indeed, was still full of the labyrinths of narrow alleys and lanes, the remains of what the Middle Ages had left; but that enormous expanse of brilliant white stone standing out in the clear sky, despite the smoke rising from countless roofs, was, as a whole, a scene of extraordinary splendour and

beauty. The population was sprightly, fond of pleasure and gay; easily aroused, as was seen in the days of the Fronde, but at this time, like all France, deeply attached to the great king.

No spot in Paris, however, had such attractions for me as that majestic home of the worn-out veterans of France, the Invalides, rising from the plain of Grenelle. This noble edifice had been constructed some twenty years before; it was a grand monument of the beneficence and the renown of the great king. The immense front extended over several hundred yards; the dome was, perhaps, the most conspicuous object to be seen in the capital. The interior was divided into a number of courts, their ceilings radiant with exploits of the French army; in some of these the old warriors led the daily round of life; others were museums and armouries full of ancient relics of war. At this time Nôtre Dame was tapestried with the flags and standards taken in recent campaigns; but trophies of earlier battles were to be seen everywhere, hundreds of captured guns were ranged on the terraces of the place; one of the most interesting of these was the cannon and the ball, supposed to have caused the death of Turenne. In these years some four thousand veterans were in the Invalides; they spent hours in cultivating their little plots of garden or in lounging on the benches laid out for them; the spectacle touched the heart of every true soldier. I was fond of talking with these aged heroes of the past; a few could recollect the wars of the Fronde; they used to tell how the grand Condé baffled Turenne in the murderous engagement at St Antoine; how Mademoiselle, the virago of Orleans, fired the guns of the Bastille in the face of the young king; how Turenne saved Paris, manœuvring with admirable skill between Condé and Charles of Lorraine; others would speak of the

great invasion of Holland, and of the eventful campaigns that followed; I took especial pleasure in listening to the tale of the terrible fight of Seneffe, when Condé cut the army of the Prince of Orange in two, and yet did not gain a decisive victory; I followed, with attention that never flagged, descriptions, homely as they were, of the wonderful moves of Turenne as he struck right and left at enemies far superior in force. I had myself beheld part of the late war in the Netherlands; but I heard more than one interesting account of the great battle of Fleurus, where Luxemburg, turning to advantage a long screen of woodland, surrounded and routed the army of the Prince of Waldeck. But nothing, perhaps, made such impression on me as the stories of these veterans about the old army of France, and the immense changes that had taken place in war. Half a century before, that army was a mere feudal array; it was in the hands of great noble officers; its order of battle was nearly always the same; it seldom exceeded twenty or thirty thousand men in a stricken field. And yet that army did wonderful things when under the command of Condé and Turenne; and for its size it was, perhaps, a better force than the huge armies of the present day, magnificent as their appearance was, and enormous as were their numbers compared with the past.

Occasionally, too, as an attendant of Villars, I had the privilege of beholding Versailles. The palace, the masterpiece, perhaps, of the reign of the great king, was an image of the royalty of Louis XIV. in its grandest aspect. The art of man, directed by the ruler of France, had subdued Nature and transformed a marsh, overlooked by a pretty château of Louis XIII., into a paradise of architecture and of sylvan loveliness. On either side of a great central building, the abode of the king and his nearest kindred, spread

an immense front, twice as broad as that of the Invalides, from which rose the buildings inhabited by the Court. The structure, as a whole, was of enormous size, and decked out with all kinds of ornaments; it was a type of the supremacy of a master over submissive subjects. As you approached the palace by the roads leading from Paris you entered a series of noble courts; as you looked at it where it towered over the country you saw a marvellous scene of woodland, *parterres* and well-ordered gardens, rich with flowers, the works of the sculptor and artificial fountains, and crowned over a great space by a colossal terrace. The interior of the king's rooms was a monument to the achievements of his reign; the ceilings and walls were decorated with the victories of Condé and Turenne; the display of tapestry, of pictures, of sumptuous plate, was amazing. The lesser apartments were scarcely less splendid; and I marvelled at the extent of the huge stables, in which more than 300 horses were kept, at the gorgeous appearance of the royal chapel, at the superb orangery which had nothing like it in Europe. Not the least astonishing of these creations were the woods, transplanted from great distances, and now flourishing over thousands of acres, and the aqueducts and the gigantic machine by which a barren plain had been fed with abundant waters. The most beautiful feature of Versailles, however, was the noble gallery of mirrors, where, on occasions of State, the choicest festivities of the Court were held. It was my good fortune, in after life, to be a witness of a few of these grand gatherings—it was a scene of enchantment to watch the forms of all that was most noble and lovely in France, reflected and multiplied in a blaze of lustre as they moved in the measures of the dance or fell into brilliant

groups. I may add that, even at this time, the town of Versailles, lately a mere village, was being filled with the hotels of the rising *noblesse* of the realm.

Louis XIV., I have said, had by this time long ceased to make Paris his abode; he had never forgotten, I have heard, the rebellion of the Fronde, when the citizens had defied his arms. On rare occasions, however, he went progress through his "good town," as the phrase was; received the homage of the great burghers at the Hôtel de Ville, dined in state at the Tuileries or the Louvre in the presence of a crowd of spectators, and heard loyal addresses from the submissive Parliament, an assembly of princes, nobles and lawyers, very different from that which had bearded his mother and the Italian Mazarin. Wherever he went he was followed by shouting multitudes, in the midst of which his retinue appeared to be lost; he took especial pleasure in driving through the new boulevards—fine streets that had been spreading out for years—and in passing under the triumphal arches that commemorated the great war with the Dutch and Germans. But the king spent most of his time at Versailles; the palace was the centre of the administration of his realm, as well as the seat of his Court. Here he received envoys from every European sovereign, and deputations from the farthest lands of the earth; all bore witness to the grandeur of France and his far-reaching influence. Ambassadors from the Emperor, from the Kings of Spain and of England—William III. had been acknowledged to be king in fact, though James II. retained the empty title—were to be seen in the royal circle, with ambassadors from the great Turk and from the half-barbarian Czar of Muscovy; French colonists from the great lakes of Canada,

and swarthy princes from the vast empire of the Moguls were often graciously welcomed by the great king. Louis, too, worked at Versailles with his ministers; all the details of the armies, of the fleets, of the finances, of the internal state of France, were laid before his eyes and arranged by him, but the great men of the past were being replaced by inferior successors; and, though the king toiled hard at his arduous tasks, he was already beginning to take too much on himself, and was giving proof of the favouritism to be so ruinous in the later years of his reign. At this time, indeed, Villars seldom had an audience, though he was certainly the ablest soldier of France, and he was about to be engaged in a very important mission; he used to tell me how he chafed at being kept in a position far below his merits. After the work of the day was over the king sometimes gave great banquets, at which a magnificent assemblage of guests met; the evenings were usually devoted to the representation of the pieces of the best French playwrights, to splendid masquerades, and, as they were called, to ballets, in which the dances, the costumes, and even the usages of many foreign lands were displayed. I heard of these festive scenes from my chief; how the king sat with Maintenon in their chairs of State, how the princes and princesses were ranged below, with the lords and ladies of the Court in their places, and how superb was the spectacle to those who beheld it. By this time Marly had been built; it was named the "hermitage" when the king withdrew from affairs of State; but very few members of the Court had access to this enchanted spot; Villars was not admitted as a visitor until years afterwards.

In 1698 I accompanied Villars on a mission from Louis XIV. to the Emperor. This was the first of the charges of supreme importance entrusted to my

chief, whether in peace or in war; negotiations, which stirred every Court in Europe, were in progress touching the succession to the vast monarchy of Spain, a dominion extending over many peoples and lands, and now in the dying hands of an imbecile king. Villars was sent to try what he could do at Vienna, where he had made, I have said, a name for himself. We left Paris with a goodly retinue; crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg and journeyed through the lands of Baden—Villars paid his respects to the prince and his consort—and then, descending on Ulm, reached the course of the Danube. All that belonged to the embassy—secretaries, aides-de-camp, servants, horses and coaches—were embarked in great barges and borne down the river; we glided along its waters for many days without meeting a single mishap. This, my chief has told me, first put into his head his celebrated plan of marching on Vienna a few years afterwards, a plan which, had he had an opportunity to carry it out, would assuredly have changed the fortunes of Europe. I was in the capital of the empire for a few months only, but had several occasions to see what it was. The city is scarcely a third part of Paris in extent, and it had little of the magnificence of that great seat of empire. But the Church of St Stephen towered over the landscape; the Hofberg, rising from the centre of the old town, was a curious palace, the work of successive centuries. Vienna, like Paris, was growing beyond the walls of the Middle Ages; but its suburbs were insignificant and mean. The city still bore the marks of the great Turkish siege, remembered with feelings of terror mingled with pride. The fortifications had been breached at several points. I climbed the height whence Sobieski and his Poles descended on the unguarded camps of the Ottomans and put the hitherto victorious infidels to flight; but had Kara

Mustapha been a real commander, the power of Christendom in Germany might have been destroyed. The arsenal of Vienna was full of trophies of the siege; the most remarkable was an enormous chain which kept together a long bridge of boats constructed by the Turks to master the Danube. I saw little or nothing of the Emperor and his Court; but I noticed that Vienna, a town of narrow streets and lanes, was crowded with a population in which the West and the East seemed to meet—Austrians, Poles, Jews, Bohemians, Hungarians—a strange medley. I was presented by Villars to Eugene of Savoy, then, as always, an intimate friend, but soon to be an adversary in a tremendous war. The prince, already recognised as the first of the imperial chiefs, had made himself famous for his conduct in the great day of Zenta, where he had cut a Turkish army in two on the Theiss, giving proof of extraordinary daring and resource. He was to triumph over and over again until he met Villars, on equal terms, in the field.

After a short stay at Vienna I was sent off to Versailles, with despatches from my chief to Louis XIV. Villars, I have since heard, had given advice to the king with regard to the settlement of the Spanish Monarchy which did not fall in with the views of his ministers; and Villars, I know, was not in favour at the Imperial Court. He used to complain of the precedence given to the Ambassador of Spain, of the stiff bearing and the dull pride of the Emperor, of the rudeness of the young King of the Romans, the heir to the three crowns, and of the want of courtesy shown by Austrian statesmen: all this was in strange contrast with the dignity and charm of Versailles. There was, doubtless, much truth in these angry remarks; but though a diplomatist of a very high order and successful in great

diplomatic charges, Villars was not without certain faults of temper; he was impatient, and would not bear being crossed; he was to show these defects on a great occasion with results disastrous to France, and even to his own renown. In fact, though quite a match for Marlborough in the field, he was certainly inferior to the great Englishman in the arts of conciliation, and of gaining the hearts of negotiators with whom he came in contact, though I remember with pride how he never stooped to the treachery and baseness of which Marlborough has been accused. Having delivered my despatches, I was placed for a short time in the staff of General Tallard, a brilliant and even a capable soldier, not as responsible for the calamity of Blenheim as has been supposed; I was treated by him with the courtesy so characteristic of most French commanders. Tallard, like Villars, had been employed in negotiations respecting the Spanish Succession; he had appeared with extraordinary pomp at the Court of William III., as Portland, sent from England for the same purpose, had made a magnificent appearance at Versailles. About this time I received intelligence about my family at home; England and France were at peace and the posts ran freely. My mother and sisters had been lost to the outside things of the world and remained in a religious house near Tralee in Kerry, but I learned with profound regret that my brother Maurice, the heir of Offaly, had left the true faith and had taken to the profession of the law in London.[1] As a Catholic, indeed, he would have been shut out from this calling, but his apostasy gave me much pain. I must, however, say, to do him justice, that he used sometimes to question the teaching of Father Nicholas, and he always had a

[1] My kinsman's statement is correct. Maurice O'Connor, my great-great grandfather became a member of the English Bar.—EDITOR.

habit of thinking for himself. I had letters also from M. de Bacquancourt; with several families of Huguenot refugees, he had settled at a village called Portarlington, on the verge of Offaly; the little colony had established itself in the place, and though it was a swampy flat of the River Barrow, it had already made it a seat of French life and industry. My friend, my late prisoner, sent me an affectionate message, and told me that he had written in my behalf to his kinsmen in France and the Low Countries.

I had not long to wait before I received a message from M. De Bacquancourt's elder brother, inviting me to visit him at his home in Normandy. General Tallard gave me a long furlough. I had a pleasant ride of five days from Paris, following the rich and beautiful valley of the Seine, and reached the château of my host near the little town of Caudebec, about midway between Rouen and the great port of Havre de Grace. I had seen nothing before of the country life of French seigneurs, and was charmed with its lively gaiety and kindly freedom. I used to dwell with delight on the aspect of the ancient châteaux, with their high peaked roofs, their courts, their dovecotes and their trim gardens. I was enchanted with the hospitality which prevailed everywhere. The peasantry, too, had on the whole, a more prosperous look than that of their class in other parts of France; the lands they cultivated were fertile and well laid out; they were contented vassals of superiors who usually lived in their midst. M. de Bacquancourt was the head of a family of the *noblesse* of the gown which had given Presidents to the great Parliament that sat at Rouen; but it had settled in its present domain for many years, and stood quite as high as any of the neighbouring *noblesse* of the sword. He welcomed me, from the first, as much more than a guest; thanked me for

saving, as he declared, a brother's life; and told me much of the history of his house as we used to go on horseback about his farms, or played backgammon or games of chance after dinner. The Bacquancourts had been of the true faith, up to the close of the wars of religion; one branch had then taken to the Calvinist heresy, and had, as I have said, called its members by the name of Des Vœux; but they were not separated by the division of creed, and they lived happily on their ancestral lands until the great Huguenot emigration took place. M. de Bacquancourt's brother had then to abandon his home, and to fly with his household from France into Holland; my host often told me how his unfortunate kinsman was tracked by armed men to the coast at Fécamp and with difficulty escaped in an open boat to sea. His lands had been forfeited and his children proscribed. "I am loath to believe," M. de Bacquancourt more than once remarked, "that the king could know all that had been done in his name." "No doubt," I would reply, "all this was hard, but what was it compared to the infamous deeds of Cromwell?"

The family of M. de Bacquancourt consisted of his wife, an only son and two daughters. Madame de Bacquancourt was rather a haughty dame, a scion of the noble house of Grosmenil; the son, Alphonse, had a company in the regiment of Navarre, and was one of my comrades-in-arms on the calamitous day of Blenheim. The eldest daughter, Marie, was affianced to the heir of a neighbouring seigneur; the other, Estelle, was the darling of her parents and the flower of their household. Our hearts had soon joined in close and tender sympathy; we became deeply attached to each other; her mother did much to prevent our union, and the authority of a mother in France is

immense in these matters. Love, nevertheless overcame all obstacles; and M. de Bacquancourt, who had treated me as one of the family, at last consented that I should become his son-in-law; he was good enough to say that, though a poor Irish exile, I was a soldier who had a future before him. I was married when in my twenty-ninth year; half a century has since passed over our heads, bringing with it the manifold changes of life; yet from the hour that my Estelle placed her hand in mine and vowed before the priest to be my true wife, to the present time, when we are both drawing near the grave, our union has been one of unmixed happiness. The tresses that were raven have become white, the lithe and radiant figure is bent with age, the open brow and the round cheek are wrinkled, but the fond heart still beats with the affection of old; the serene spirit, the sound judgment remain unchanged. As I look back over the buried past, I thank Heaven that I have been blessed with such a helpmeet. I shall not describe the usages of a marriage in France, they are very different from those of the Ireland of my youth; enough to say that my bride was welcomed by scores of friends in her chamber at home; and that we then set forth to visit her many Norman kinsfolk. At the châteaux, where we were guests, we were always greeted with fireworks and with salutes of musketry; honour was done to us in gay festal meetings; Estelle was always placed at the right hand of the host; I must add that I was treated with true French courtesy. In the little journey we made we went through a prosperous land. I was glad to see the shipping and the busy sea life of Havre, the stately cathedral and the quays of Rouen, and especially the Parliament House where the De Bacquancourts were still a famous name. But I beheld with pain the ruins of Dieppe

destroyed by the English in the late war; and, good Catholic as I was, I could not help feeling regret at the sight of Huguenot châteaux that knew their owners no more, and of Huguenot "temples" from which their congregations had fled.

On my return to Paris I found that General Tallard had gone as ambassador to England on another mission. During the next few months I was sent at the instance of Villars, to inspect regiments of horse in different parts of France; preparations for war were already in progress. I was thanked by my superiors for having acquitted myself well in my task; my wife and I were then in the first flush of happiness: we inhabited little dwellings near the great cavalry depots. Meanwhile, rumours about the great Spanish Succession repeatedly reached even our modest homes; Europe, indeed, was ringing with the sound of mighty events. I heard afterwards the whole story from Villars; it was a striking instance how the efforts, perhaps sincere, of the rulers of the world, to avert a terrible war, were baffled. Louis XIV. and William III. had really the negotiations in their hands; even the Emperor played but a secondary part; this was a striking proof of the authority of the late Prince of Orange in directing the most important affairs of Europe, and notably of the increased power of England. The two monarchs agreed to make a partition of the huge Spanish Monarchy, in the interests of the peace of mankind; Spain and the American Indies were to devolve on a child, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria; the Spanish Netherlands were to be governed by his father for him; France was to have a little province of Spain and all Spanish Italy, except the Duchy of Milan, which was to go to the Archduke Charles, the Emperor's second son. The Emperor, it should be observed, would not hear of these terms; Villars

when at Vienna had counselled his master to throw William over, and to deal with the Emperor; but his advice, I have said, was not much regarded at Versailles. Things were in this state when the Electoral Prince died; poison has been suspected, a common report in that age. A second Treaty of Partition was made between the two kings. By this arrangement Spain and the Indies were to become the heritage of the Archduke Charles; he was also to possess the Spanish Netherlands; France was to be given all Spanish Italy, including the Milanese, and, as before, a petty nook of Spain. The Emperor rejected these conditions also; meanwhile the unfortunate King of Spain, beset by intrigues around his deathbed, and adjured not to break up the Monarchy, bequeathed the whole of his immense dominions to the Duke of Anjou, a younger grandson of the great King of France. Louis, after some hesitation, accepted the prize; he has been charged with a great breach of faith; but William, it has been said, was trying to creep out of the late treaty, as being too advantageous to France; and the Emperor had resolved to plunge the Continent in war.

At the intelligence that the vast Monarchy of Spain has passed to a scion of the House of Bourbon, the enemy for more than a century of his House, the Emperor flamed out into indignant wrath. He had always regarded Spain and the Indies as a family appanage. He had had for months an Austrian faction at Madrid trying to secure the immense heritage for himself or for one of his sons. Villars was instantly sent away from Vienna; Eugene was placed at the head of a great army, and ere long was on his way through the passes of the Northern Alps, to invade the fair lands of Milan and of Spanish Italy. For a time, however, Europe, so to

speak, paused at the event which had just unexpectedly occurred. The Duke of Anjou was recognised as King of Spain at a number of Courts. He was proclaimed as Philip V. at Madrid, and throughout the possessions of Spain in the two worlds, with the acclaim of millions of souls of different races. My wife and I beheld his departure from Versailles, where he had been presented by his grandfather to the envoys of several of the Powers of the Continent. A magnificent procession was formed, and took the road leading to Sceaux. The two monarchs, with the little Duchess of Burgundy, rode in a great gilded coach, amidst enthusiastic applause, preceded by a cavalcade of Princes of the Blood and of dukes and peers, and followed for miles by exulting crowds. France little knew what the future was to bring. William III., as was to be expected, was incensed at the violation, as he deemed it, of a solemn treaty, and at the failure of the policy on which he had set his heart, owing to the immense addition just made to the power of the great king, who had lately exclaimed, that "now there were no Pyrenees." He felt that he had been baffled by the adversary he had contended against from his youth. He had real cause of grave apprehensions as a far-seeing statesman. He believed that Holland would fall an easy prey to France, and that England would be placed in extreme peril, as indeed had been the judgment of the best English ministers, even during the ignoble reigns of the Stuarts. Should France be firmly seated in the Spanish Netherlands, he feared that Louis XIV. would become the master of Europe. He openly spoke out his mind to his Parliament, but that assembly did not respond to his appeal. He could not even help recognising the young King of Spain. William, in fact, was not popular at this time in England. The nation disliked the Second

Partition Treaty, which, it was said, gave the Mediterranean to France. The immense losses of trade in the late war were not forgotten; the cry against Dutch favourites had been renewed, and the Tory party, always opposed to a conflict with France, had, for the present, a majority in the House of Commons.

William, nevertheless, though as yet ill-supported in England, did not abandon the policy of his life, and endeavoured to combine another European League against France. He left England for Holland in the summer of 1701, taking with him the personage who was to be the most dangerous foe of the great king in the war of the Spanish succession. William was a man of the world as well as a statesman. He had been reconciled to Marlborough for some time, though well aware of the character of the man. The reconciliation was in his own and Marlborough's interests. He knew that he could not live many months; at his death, his crown would pass to the Princess Anne, a dependent of Marlborough and his wife, and a law had been lately made by the English Parliament excluding, not only James and his son, but all Catholic princes from the throne. Marlborough, therefore, had the strongest inducement to give up intrigues with St Germains, and to maintain the order of things that had been established since 1688; this was sufficient to secure his adhesion to it, at least for the present. He was given the command of an army in Holland, and made ambassador extraordinary to the States. With his master and Heinsius, the foremost of Dutch statesmen, he addressed himself to the task of forming the new Coalition against Louis XIV. An accident favoured the intended design. Louis had expelled Dutch garrisons from fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands in order to assert the rights of

his grandson. This provoked much indignation and illwill, though the king sent the garrisons in safety to their homes. Villars has often told me that this was a mistake. Some of these troops fought against us at Blenheim and Ramillies; negotiations now went on at The Hague. Villars has insisted that this was a conclusive proof that William had been playing false in the matter of the partition of Spain. However this may have been, a treaty was made between the Emperor, the King of England and the Dutch, in which most of the Princes and Powers of Europe joined. This formed what was called the Second Grand Alliance against the ruler of France. Conditions had just been laid before the great king. It deserves notice that they were completely different from those to which he had agreed before, a circumstance of no small significance. In fact, they resembled, in many respects, those which were finally arranged after years of a fatal war. Marlborough was the principal author of the new League. He had begun his grand diplomatic career. He had, from the first, given proof of the diplomatic genius in which he excelled all the men of his time.

It is doubtful, however, if the English Parliament would have given its sanction to the new-made treaty, and have backed William in the step he had taken, but for an event which France had cause deeply to regret. James II. was taken suddenly ill in the autumn of 1701, and died after a few days had passed. The discrowned king was laid in the Chapel of the Benedictines in Paris. Louis XIV. had stood by his bed in his last sickness; yielding to the entreaties of the queen of James, and of Maintenon, he had promised to recognise the young Prince of Wales as the King of England. The people of England broke into one of those tempests of passion, of which there have been so many strange instances.

The French King had dared to settle the succession of British Monarchy, and to undo the work of the last thirteen years. The insolent challenge could have but one answer—war. Deputations flocked in from all parts of the country; explanations were sent from Versailles in vain; William III. was adjured to draw the sword. The Parliament voted large sums to assist the League, and set considerable armaments on foot. The young "Pretender," as he was called, was declared a traitor. At the elections to the House of Commons, which had just taken place, for William had dexterously seized the occasion, the Whigs regained much of the power they had lost. The Tories shrank from crossing the national will. War with France was declared with scarcely an opposing voice. England, certainly the most formidable enemy of France, thus flung herself into the Grand Alliance. She was to throw a decisive weight into the scales of fortune. William, however, did not live to see the result of his successful policy. He died from the effects of a fall from his horse; his worn-out frame could not resist the shock. He was one of the conquerors of Ireland, and a deadly foe of my adopted country; but his great qualities must command my admiration and respect. Never consummate in the field, he was a consummate statesman. His tenacity and forethought were above praise. At Versailles it was hoped, for a moment, that the League would be broken up by his death, but the expectation was to prove fruitless; the work was long to survive the architect; it was to be completed by more than one able successor. By the spring of 1702 hostile armies were in motion, from the Scheldt to the Po, against France. Eugene had already gained victories in Italy, on which I shall say a few words. Europe was being involved in a gigantic conflict. The death of William had

made no change in the Councils of England. The Princess Anne had declared, when she became Queen, that the policy of her kinsman was approved by her. The Parliament, though still largely composed of Tories, was enthusiastic in supporting the general crusade. A significant proof of this was made. Marlborough, the chief immediate author of the Grand Alliance, was given the command of the English and Dutch armies, and had reached The Hague in the early summer of 1702.

## CHAPTER VI

My chief, Villars, married about the time when the war of the Spanish Succession had become general. His wife was a great heiress of a Norman family, connected with the *noblesse* of the gown. She did something to raise her warrior lord's fortunes. I must say she was never wanting in kindness to Estelle and myself; but she was young, fond of admiration and extremely proud. She was too exacting to an uxorious husband; indeed, Villars was often henpecked, as I have heard was the case with Marlborough. The war separated my chief and myself from our wives. In the first months of 1702 we were on our way to the army of the Rhine, where Villars, under Catinat, had the command of the cavalry. The arms of France, I have said, had not been successful, even when the Emperor had been the only enemy of the great king in the field. In the early spring of 1701, Eugene of Savoy, at the head of some 40,000 men, had issued from the Austrian Alps into the lands of Trent. Instead of descending upon the plains of Lombardy by the ordinary route, through the valley of the Adige, he had turned to the left, and, threading the defiles of the ranges that overlook the States of the Republic of Venice, had entered Italy at its north-eastern borders. The march was one of extraordinary daring, characteristic of the genius of the man, but he could not have made it had not the Venetian Senate been, at heart at least, an ally of the

Emperor, as it was, indeed, throughout the greater part of the war. Catinat was opposed to Eugene with an army superior in numbers; he had wished to attack his adversary at the mouth of the Alpine passes; but he had been prevented by orders from Versailles. He had been directed to defend the valley of the Adige, where the river approaches the Lake of Garda; and as the line of his defence had been turned by the bold and admirable movement of Eugene, he was compelled to retreat in order to confront his enemy. Eugene, advancing with remarkable speed, had crossed the Adige and the Po by the month of June, near the confluence of the two great streams. He then moved up the southern bank of the Po and routed a detachment of Catinat's forces at Carpi, a town in the lands of Modena. The French commander fell back to the Mincio. He was reinforced by the Duke of Savoy, the father of the young Duchess of Burgundy; but he soon found out that the duke was a bad ally. He retreated to the Oglio to cover the Duchy of Milan, the most valuable possession perhaps of Philip V. in Italy. Eugene was now, so to speak, in view of his quarry. He had given proof of astonishing skill and resource; but without the help of the Venetians he could not have done what he did, and Catinat, if worsted, had not had fair play. Louis XIV., however, was deeply moved; he replaced Catinat by Villeroy, his ill-starred favourite, whose incapacity in the field had been already displayed. Ere long Villeroy acted after his wonted fashion. Reckless and arrogant, though feeble in the operations of war, he attacked Eugene when entrenched in a strong position at Chiari, a town near the Upper Oglio; he was completely defeated, with very heavy losses. Eugene, still backed by the men in power at Venice, who supplied his army with all that it

needed, had now made his footing in Lombardy good. Villeroy had his winter quarters at Cremona, his forces spread between the Adda and the Po. It deserves notice that he had received no help from the Spanish rulers at Milan, though the Duchy was already in grave danger.

I have dwelt for a moment on this campaign of Eugene, for Villars always maintained that it was a masterpiece. The war, I have remarked, had involved half Europe in 1702. Many armies were marching against France. It was connected, too, with another war between the young King of Sweden, the Poles and the Muscovite Czar, which was not without results on the progress of the greater contest. At the beginning of the war of the Spanish Succession, it was the general belief even of soldiers and statesmen that Louis XIV. would get the better of the Grand Alliance. France had already triumphed twice over great leagues, even when combined by William III. She had now, besides her own immense resources, the support of the vast Monarchy of Spain. She was soon to have the Elector of Bavaria an ally. In Spanish Italy, and, above all, in Bavaria, she would possess military positions of the first order, from which her forces might perhaps reach the heart of the empire. The French armies, too, were still the best in Europe; they had hardly known what defeat was for nearly half a century. They had had, not to speak of Turenne and Condé, a succession of capable chiefs at their head. Besides, the Grand Alliance, it was believed, could not be held together. Its master builder had disappeared from the scene; it was exposed to causes of weakness, division and discord. In England a Stuart was upon the throne. The Tory party, always well inclined to France, if not supreme, was very strong in the Parliament. Was

it probable that England would be the enemy of France she had been when under the rule of her late sovereign? The English and the Dutch, too, had of old been deadly foes. They had been united by a great statesman of the House of Nassau; but this union was not likely to endure, and Holland and the States had not long ago been close allies of France. The Emperor, besides, was an imperious and ill-tempered potentate. His pretensions to the whole of the Spanish Monarchy had been repudiated by William, an author of the Partition Treaties, and though he could place great armies on foot, he had not the means of keeping them long in the field without the assistance of the two great maritime Powers. He was, moreover, continually menaced by the Turk, an ally of France, and by a universal Hungarian rising; and he was disliked by several of the German princes, who themselves had scarcely ever acted in concert. In these circumstances, the League could hardly prevail over the great absolute ruler of France, backed as he now was by allies he had not had before.

These expectations, however, were not to be fulfilled. France was brought to the verge of destruction in this calamitous war. Spain was to be a burden to her, not a support. She was given a great opportunity when Bavaria joined her, but she lost it, and the alliance led ere long to Blenheim. Besides, her resources for war were not what they had been; her population, her wealth were declining; she was still suffering from the exhaustion caused by the late conflict. Her armies, too, were showing increasing defects, as Vauban had explained to the king. They were commanded for years by chiefs of the second order. The powers of Villars and Berwick were not turned to account until late. Worse than all, the administration of the State was

bad. The king, now in the decline of life, took on himself to direct everything, even to arrange military operations from Versailles, a terrible and disastrous mistake. The favouritism, which was the greatest error of his later years, was never more unhappily displayed; it had the most unfortunate results. There were no great ministers, too, for war or for civil affairs; no one who even approached Louvois or Colbert. The finances gradually became in a deplorable state; the military organisation of France was imperfect throughout the war. The royal sun of Louis, in a word, was setting. His kingdom and his people, when peace was made at last, were so prostrated that they have never since wholly recovered. The Grand Alliance, on the other hand, remained united, despite bickerings and jealousies of many kinds. This, I have always heard, was mainly the work of Marlborough, as great a diplomatist perhaps as he was a warrior. England, too, and the Dutch continued to be friends, and maintained the contest almost to the last moment. The Emperor, though giving a great deal of trouble, was more earnest in this than in any war; and if for a time he was placed in the gravest dangers, he successfully emerged from the trial at last. He was, moreover, better supported by the German princes than had been the case in the other wars of his reign. He had made the Elector of Brandenburg King of Prussia, and the king was a persistent enemy of France. This sentiment was shared by other German potentates, though sometimes they were at odds with each other. On the whole, the League combined against Louis XIV. was more powerful and strongly compacted than any league of the day of William III.; and though Heinsius and other great men played a conspicuous part, Marlborough, I repeat, was the master spirit of

the new Grand Alliance. But what contributed most to the success of the Allies, and to the disasters that befell France, was that military capacity was for a long time on their side, and, unlike what had happened in the days of Condé and Turenne, was not on the side of the great king. The results of the war were altogether different from what they had been in the wars of another time. Blenheim, Ramillies and Turin had been fought before the really great soldiers of France made their influence felt on events.

In 1702, as I have related, France was being assailed by a host of enemies, from the Spanish Netherlands to the Lombard plains; she was threatened, too, at sea by the English and the Dutch fleets. A great disaster befell her ally, Spain; this reacted with grave results on herself. A hostile fleet and an armed force under the Duke of Ormond, a near kinsman of the Ormond of my youth, made an attempt to descend on Cadiz, the chief arsenal of the Spanish Monarchy, but the assailants were beaten off and the enterprise failed. The enemy, however, had his revenge and more; Château Renaud, a distinguished French admiral, was conducting at this time the treasure ships of Spain, laden with the produce of the mines of Mexico and Peru, the principal resources of Philip V., to Cadiz, the port to which they were bound; but Château Renaud, hearing that the English and Dutch were in his way, proposed to take them into one of the harbours of France. Spanish punctilio and pride resented this; the French chief led the galleons, as they were called, into the unprotected roadstead of Vigo, supporting them with a squadron of his warships; but the allied fleets attacked him with very superior forces; the galleons and his squadron were burned and destroyed; the finances of Spain were ruined for years. In the

Spanish Netherlands the course of the war was not of good omen to the arms of the great king. An army, perhaps 60,000 strong, was placed in the hands of the young Duke of Burgundy, the elder brother of the King of Spain and the heir of the monarchy of the House of Bourbon; it might have been expected that this force would have everything that was needed to keep the field. But Chamillart, the War Minister, was a very different man from Louvois; he owed his high office to the favour of Louis XIV.; he had, besides, the onerous task of managing the finances of the realm; he proved throughout the war unequal to his most weighty charge. The Duke of Burgundy's army was ill prepared; this, indeed, may be said of most of the French armies in this tremendous contest. The campaign, nevertheless, was at the outset not unfavourable to France: an army of the League laid siege to Kayserwarth, a fortress of the Electorate of Cologne, at this time in alliance with the great king; Boufflers, the real leader of the army of the duke, suddenly invaded Holland with a considerable force and routed a large hostile detachment under the walls of Nimeguen. But Marlborough had ere long appeared on the scene, bringing with him an English and Dutch army; the Allies were now superior in numbers; Marlborough crossed the Meuse and had soon driven the Duke of Burgundy and Boufflers beyond the Demer. The French army, in fact, was no match for its enemy; the Duke of Burgundy returned to Versailles disgusted with the results of the campaign; Boufflers confined himself to the defence of Spanish Brabant; Marlborough was able almost at will to besiege and capture the fortresses on the Lower Meuse, including the great stronghold and city of Liège. The English chief, Villars always insisted, had already the invasion of France in view.

The campaign of 1702 in Italy was ushered in by an exploit which threw fresh lustre on the Irish exiles engaged in the service of France. Eugene made a bold effort to seize Cremona and to capture the garrison within the fortress; he had ascertained that his troops could enter the town through an ancient aqueduct beneath the ground; other troops were to second the attack from a bridge of boats on the Po. The attempt was very nearly successful; Villeroy was made prisoner almost in an instant, a loss fortunate, the wits jested, for France; the Austrians mastered part of the ramparts and poured into the streets; the garrison was taken completely by surprise. Cremona must have fallen into the hands of the enemy had he been able to force the passage of the bridge, but it was destroyed by Mahony, a brave officer of our race; the troops under his command, French writers have allowed, did wonders. After a desperate struggle the Austrians were driven out of the place; Mahony undoubtedly was the hero of the day; he was cordially greeted by the great king at Versailles, an extraordinary mark of favour to an exile of inferior rank in the army. The rest of the campaign was less advantageous to France than it ought to have been had not untoward events happened. Vendôme, a descendant of a bastard of Henry IV., was placed at the head of Villeroy's army; he was a general of remarkable natural gifts impaired by debauchery and low vice; it was scarcely possible to reckon on him with confidence on any occasion. He was now, however, far superior in numbers to Eugene; he gradually drove his antagonist out of Lombardy, and even compelled him to raise the siege of Mantua, which Eugene had invested for some months; he then followed the prince to the southern bank of the Po, leaving a part of his forces

under Vaudemont, at this time the Governor of Milan, but a colleague of William III. in 1695; this division of force Villars condemned as a mistake. Eugene fell on Vendôme near the little town of Luzzara, at a short distance from the great river; a bloody but indecisive action was fought; both generals claimed a victory to little purpose. Vendôme, however, perhaps perceiving his error, summoned Vaudemont speedily to come to his aid; had this been done Eugene would have been in grave straits, he might have been overwhelmed by largely superior numbers. Vaudemont, nevertheless, did not stir from his camps; he has been suspected of treason to the cause of France; two of his sons were certainly in the army of Eugene. Another circumstance also hampered Vendôme, the young King of Spain had joined the French army; it was thought dangerous to expose him to the risks of a great battle; time was lost in reducing two or three small fortresses. Meanwhile Eugene had taken a strong position behind the Secchia, a considerable feeder of the Lower Po, and though he was ultimately dislodged from this and forced to retreat behind the Mincio, the campaign had not had decisive results. The great Austrian commander, inferior in force as he was, had still tenaciously kept hold of Italy.

The campaign of this year on the Rhine was unfavourable at the outset to France, but ended in a victory which brought out the admirable powers of Villars in the field. The main army, I have said, was under the command of Catinat, but the Marshal was almost in disgrace at Versailles; his forces were insufficient and badly supplied. He established himself in Alsace, on the Moder; Villars urged him to advance to the Lauter in the northern verge of the province; but Catinat, knowing that he was under a cloud, became timid and inactive, and refused

to move. Prince Louis of Baden meanwhile had laid siege to Landau, a great prize of well-fought campaigns; he was certainly superior in force to the Marshal, and no effort had been spared to make his troops as effective as possible, for the young King of the Romans was the nominal head of the army. The fortress fell after a fine defence. Catinat, who had done nothing to relieve it, retreated on Strasbourg, a movement severely condemned by Villars; this proved to be the unfortunate end of a brilliant and honoured career. About this time the Elector of Bavaria declared for France; Louis XIV. ordered Villars to take the main part of Catinat's army, and to endeavour to effect a junction with this new ally; Villars was to march into Swabia through the Black Forest. Baden, after the siege of Landau, made a corresponding movement; he occupied Friedlingen on the Upper Rhine, close to the borders of the Swiss mountains; his position was one of no ordinary strength. Friedlingen was, in itself, a fortress; it stood among heights capable of a strenuous defence; it commanded a plain leading to the Rhine, along which an enemy would be obliged to advance. Villars had soon reached Huningen on the French bank of the Rhine; the place was nearly opposite to Friedlingen on the German bank, but the river divided him from his enemy; the bridge head and other works had been destroyed; it was difficult in the extreme to force the passage. My chief, however, turning to account an islet on the Rhine, succeeded in throwing a bridge of boats across, covered by batteries skilfully disposed; he sent a detachment lower down the stream to Neubourg, and here also he contrived to bridge the river. This diversion, a feint, threatened Baden's right; he sent a body of troops to stop the hostile force at Neubourg; Villars instantly marched

his army across the bridge at Huningen, and fell on his adversary on the 14th of October. The two armies were each perhaps 30,000 strong; the French infantry rushed across the plain, and bravely carried the heights near Friedlingen; but they were suddenly seized by a strange panic—one of the signs of want of discipline too common in their ranks—they were only rallied under the inspiration of Villars, who harangued the fugitive troops in words of fire; meanwhile the French cavalry had routed Baden's horsemen; the whole army now in hand gained a brilliant triumph. Friedlingen was seized, and the German bank of the Rhine held by Villars; Baden retreated through the defiles of the Black Forest.

Villars received the staff of a Marshal of France for his victory; it was a mark of the special favour of the great king that he obtained this high distinction alone, and not with other colleagues. He had, however, many enemies at Versailles. Years were to pass before his master gave him his full confidence. The Elector of Bavaria made no attempt to stretch a hand to Villars; Baden returned to threaten the frontiers of Alsace; Villars, leaving part of his army near the scenes of the late conflict, took the other part to make head against Baden. The events of the few months that followed on the theatre of the war on the Rhine may be slightly passed over. No operations of importance occurred; Baden ultimately placed his army within the lines of Stollhofen, a series of entrenchments near Strasbourg; Tallard, who had been made a marshal and had replaced Catinat, kept his adversary in check on the borders of Alsace. Ere long the Elector was attacked by a German and Austrian army, commanded by an officer of the name of Styrum; he had defeated it and driven it back on Ratisbon, but he was still threatened by superior forces, and he could not

possibly approach the French on the Rhine. Villars was ordered to effect his junction with the Elector; he executed the task with admirable skill and resource. Having collected his forces, perhaps 40,000 men, he crossed the Rhine at Huningen and at Neubourg, and then, moving rapidly down the river, he laid siege to Kehl, the fortified bridge head of Strasbourg, his purpose being, when he had mastered the place, to descend on the Danube, through the valley of the Kinzig, the best avenue through the labyrinth of the Black Forest. Kehl fell after a rather short siege, conducted by Villars in defiance of the advice of Vauban; by the middle of April 1703 he was on his way to join the Elector, of whom, I have said, he had been a friend and a colleague. This great movement seems to have escaped the notice of Baden, at least he made no opposition to it; but its boldness alarmed many chiefs of the French army—the grand traditions of Turenne had been forgotten—and several regiments, when they found themselves entangled in a formidable maze of forest, hills and defiles, through which the Kinzig with difficulty makes its way, showed symptoms of indiscipline and even of mutiny. But Villars had the true genius of command; after making a few severe examples, he restored order and breathed his own confidence into the hearts of his men—this was one of his supreme merits as a chief. The army, having taken two or three hill forts, emerged at last into the valleys of the Upper Danube, and joined the Elector near Villengen in the second week of May. I shall not notice the spiteful gossip of wits at Versailles, who gave out that Villars, before he made this admirable march, had wasted weeks in idle dalliance with his young wife.[1]

[1] St Simon was the worst of these detractors. *See* his *Mémoires*, II., pp. 451, 452. His charges and the misstatements in the inaccurate and

The French and Bavarian armies had effected their junction; they were probably about 70,000 strong. My great chief proposed operations to his colleague worthy of the commanding genius of Turenne, and suggested to him, I have said, by his voyage on the Danube a few years before. The French army was to advance towards Ulm, at this time in the Elector's hands; it was to spread in cantonments along the river, as if seeking repose after a difficult march; the Bavarians were then to assemble between Munich and Ulm, to make for the Danube by a rapid march, and, joining hands with a detachment from the forces of Villars, were to embark on the Danube to siege Passau and Lintz, small places that could offer no resistance, and to descend on Vienna, the seat of the empire. The success of the enterprise, skilfully masked and perfectly designed, was certain; the way to Vienna lay open; no enemy on the theatre of war could even check the movement. Styrum was far away with an inferior and a beaten army; Louis of Baden was near Strasbourg and in the Franconian lands; Eugene was in Italy, scarcely able to oppose Vendôme; Marlborough was hundreds of miles distant in the Spanish Netherlands, on the Meuse, indeed, but observed by Villeroy, unluckily restored to France, and indirectly by Tallard in Alsace. Villars, as we soldiers say, had "seen the fault in the cuirass"; Vienna was obviously at his mercy; in all probability the fall of the capital would bring the Grand Alliance to an end, and would make Louis XIV. the undisputed lord of the Continent. Two circumstances, also, told immensely in my chief's favour; the war in the North was keeping several German princes in their states, for Charles XII. of Sweden

even false Memoirs of Villars have injured the reputation of this great General. They are corrected in the genuine Vogué edition.—EDITOR.

was menacing their coasts; what was more important, all Hungary was aflame, and was rising from the Carpathian ranges to the Drave, under the inspiration of Ragotski, a great leader of men, whose kindred had for ages been enemies of the House of Hapsburg. The Emperor Leopold got wind of the projected movement, no doubt through spies in the Elector's councils; but he felt unequal to offer even the least resistance; he had actually everything ready to abandon Vienna should the lilies of the Bourbons appear on the Danube. Many years afterwards, when still a companion-in-arms of Villars, I heard this from the lips of Eugene himself during the negotiations that led to the close of the war.[1]

This magnificent scheme was never accomplished, big as it was with the certainty of decisive success. The wife of the Elector and his ministers were sold to the Emperor; the Elector refused to make the great movement on the chief town of Austria. Villars, keeping for the moment his resentment down, proposed another plan: the Elector was to advance into the Tyrol, on which he had laid a covetous eye; Vendôme, from Italy, was to second the movement, Tallard was to march from Alsace to the Danube; the combined armies were then to push on to Vienna. These operations were complicated, and would take time; they were less well conceived than the original project; but at the outset they were in part successful. The Elector took some fortresses in the Tyrolean Alps, but Vendôme moved slowly, and

[1] My kinsman's statement is perfectly correct. Villars's *Mémoires*, II., p. 90, the genuine Vogué edition remarks:—"Le Maréchal de Villars qui venoit de passer, trois ans dans cette capitale de l'empereur et de l'empire, connoissoit mieux que personne toutes les facilités de faire cette conquête, et nous verrons, dans la suite de ces mémoires, que l'Empereur Léopold en croyoit la perte si infaillible qu'il fut sur le point d'en sortir et qu'il en proposa le dessein au Prince Eugène; c'est ce dernier qui le déclara à Rastat au Maréchal de Villars."—EDITOR.

against his will, out of Lombardy; Tallard remained on the Rhine, laying siege to Brisach; Louis, imperfectly comprehending the intended movement, gave no peremptory orders for the support of Villars. The Elector ere long was driven out of the Tyrol; meanwhile, taking advantage of the delay of weeks, large forces were directed against the French and the Bavarian armies. An Austrian contingent crossed the Inn; Louis of Baden made for the Danube by a rapid march, and effected his junction with Styrum, who returned to the river; the situation in August had become very different from what it was in May. Villars, who had had his army near Ulm upon the Danube, now proposed to his colleague to occupy Augsburg, and from this central position to strike at the still divided enemies, as Turenne had often done with splendid results. The Elector, however, timidly held back; meanwhile Baden, separating himself from Styrum, had crossed the Danube and seized Augsburg, his object probably being to lay hold of the communications of the French army with the Rhine. By this movement—a false one, Villars thought—Baden and Styrum were divided by a great distance; Villars returned to his first grand project; he entreated the Elector to keep Baden in check, while he would descend by the Danube on Vienna with the mass of his forces, brushing aside the much weaker army of Styrum. The Elector would not second his daring colleague; Villars took the game of war into his own hands, and gained another brilliant, if a hard-fought victory. Having approached the Elector, he re-crossed the Danube; he fell on Styrum at Höchstädt, on the very field of Blenheim, crossing the Nebel where it was crossed by Marlborough; and though one of his lieutenants made a premature attack, Villars completely defeated the German commander, with

a loss, it is said, of 7000 men. In this battle three regiments of our race, led by O'Brien, Lord Clare, did great things; my heart throbbed with pride when they were thanked in the army's presence.

This victory disposed of Styrum's army; its remains were driven into the Franconian plains; the Austrian contingent recrossed the Inn. Louis of Baden alone was in Bavaria; his army was not 30,000 strong; but his position at Augsburg made him a dangerous enemy. Villars urged the Elector to march at once from Höchstädt, and to fall on the communications of Baden, which reached the Aller; this would compel Baden to break up from Augsburg, and would bring the French and the Bavarian armies into relations with Tallard, who, Brisach having fallen, was supposed to be making for the Upper Danube. The Elector, however, a rash and wrong-headed man, resolved to attack Augsburg with his own forces only; he was beaten off with considerable loss; he persisted in rejecting his colleague's advice, and remained inactive within his own dominions. Angry disputes and recriminations followed; the Elector and Villars sent their complaints to Versailles; my chief, I fear, did not spare hard words; he had been goaded and harassed for months, but he had not Marlborough's imperturbable calmness of mind. Villars marched on Memmingen with the French army; this movement forced Baden to evacuate Augsburg, leaving only a garrison in the place; Villars entreated his colleague again to advance and join Tallard, believed to be now not distant; in that event the united armies would go into winter quarters, and would be ready in the next campaign to descend on Vienna. But the Elector obstinately refused to stir a step; meanwhile, Tallard, whatever the reason, kept clinging to the Rhine, and would not march to the Danube. He

besieged and ultimately recaptured Landau, the fortress which had fallen a few months before. This was a real, nay, an important prize, but the gain was nothing compared to the loss; the French armies, which Villars hoped would be combined for a great march on Vienna in the early spring, remained separated by a wide interval; and by this time it was near the depths of winter. Villars threw up his command and set off for Versailles, after angry and scarcely becoming scenes of passion; his successor was Marsin, who had been just made a Marshal of France; he left me behind to serve on the staff of the new commander. Marsin was ere long to show that he was a bad chief; but he was a supple courtier, and soothed the Elector's vanity; they joined their forces and took Augsburg. Louis of Baden was compelled to retreat to the Swabian Alps, almost outside the theatre of war. Notwithstanding a series of unhappy accidents, the prospects of France, thanks to the genius of Villars, were still bright in Germany when the campaign of 1703 closed.

On the other parts of the vast theatre of the war events had been rather unfavourable to the arms of France. Marlborough had been loaded with honours he had not deserved, for what he had achieved in 1702; he had received the English Garter and had been made a Duke; in 1703 he was at the head of a great army, numbering probably 100,000 men. He was confronted in the Low Countries by Boufflers and Villeroy, whose forces were perhaps of equal strength; but no decisive operations took place in the field. Marlborough's purpose was probably to take Namur and to invade France by the valley of the Meuse; this, at least, was always the view of my chief; but he was turned from his object by his Dutch Allies, who insisted on his carrying on the war in the Netherlands. Rheinberg and Bonn were lost to the

Electorate of Cologne; we heard rumours, though hundreds of miles distant, of a project to lay siege to the great city of Antwerp. This enterprise, however, completely failed; Opdam, a Dutch commander, was routed by Boufflers at a place called Eckeren, after a very brilliant and skilful march; Villeroy just contrived to hold Marlborough in check. I have never fully understood these movements; but it appears certain that in this, as in other instances, Marlborough was crossed and thwarted by the Dutch commissioners in his camp, as the Elector, we have seen, crossed and thwarted Villars. Marlborough returned to the Meuse near the end of the campaign; he had not attained any marked success; but he took the small places of Huy and Limburg, and Boufflers and Villeroy had done little against him. On the Rhine, Brisach and Landau had fallen; but, as I have said, these sieges had kept Tallard away from the Upper Danube, the theatre where his presence might have had immense results; these triumphs were of no real importance. In Italy Louis XIV. had expected great things: Vendôme was far superior in force to Eugene; and Eugene had hastened to Vienna to advise the Emperor, when Villars and the Elector had effected their junction. Vendôme ought to have overpowered his enemies; but as too often was the case with him, he was unequal to himself in this campaign; and his plans were disconcerted by the march he made to approach the Elector in the Tyrol, a movement that ere long had come to nothing. The chief misfortune, however, that befell France, in Italy, was the sudden defection of the Duke of Savoy, which nearly turned the balance of forces against her. The duke, one of the most artful and shifty of men, though so closely allied to the great king, through a young daughter, had shamefully sold himself to the Emperor; his troops were

treacherously directed against their late comrades. Vendôme made a bold effort to attack Turin, and to punish a policy of evil deception; but he was not strong enough to invest the place, and the duke received assistance on which he had no right to reckon. Staremberg, the ablest lieutenant of Eugene, contrived, after an admirable march up the Po, to elude Vendôme, and to come to the relief of his enemy. The campaign in Italy was thus, on the whole, disadvantageous to France.

The position of affairs in Germany, however, had remained unchanged; a magnificent prospect for the arms of France was open. Marsin and the Elector, I have said, were in the heart of Bavaria; they held a central position between enemies, either widely apart, like Baden and Styrum, or like Marlborough and Eugene, distant from the immediate theatre of war, all too held in check by the armies of Louis XIV.; they disposed of at least 60,000 good troops; there was simply nothing to prevent them reaching Vienna. Turenne, I have no doubt, had he had the command of the forces of Marsin and the Bavarian prince, would, at this conjuncture, have broken up from his camp and made this decisive movement, even in the depths of the winter—his winter campaigns were perhaps his finest achievements; in that event the Emperor must have succumbed; the Grand Alliance could hardly have survived the disaster. But Marsin and the Elector remained inactive; Villars, bitterly attacked by enemies at Versailles, and not yet implicitly trusted by his master, was employed in another and very different task, important indeed, but not of supreme importance. In Languedoc, an ancient seat of false heresy, the Huguenots, kept down with difficulty for a time, had begun to stir again in formidable strength; a furious insurrection, spreading far and wide, broke

out in the great mountain land of the Cevennes, and, like streams of lava from a volcano, swept over the province. Bands of peasants brandishing rude arms, and headed by their "pastors," as they were called, descended tumultuously on the plain country, wrecking Catholic châteaux and the houses of Catholic farmers; they found two leaders of no ordinary powers; they carried on a kind of irregular warfare, which kept whole districts and towns in a state of terror. Fanaticism and greed gave strength to the movement; there were strange tales of prophesyings, of visions, of portents in the skies; and the Huguenot tillers of the soil refused to pay their dues to the State or their rents to their lords. The governors of the province acted with extreme harshness; they burned villages wholesale, slew peasants by hundreds, sent hundreds more to the miserable fate of the galleys, and they were backed by the exasperated Catholic priesthood, by the seigneurs, who had been wronged and despoiled, and by their Catholic retainers and tenants. I do not justify deeds such as these; they were too like to what had often been done in Ireland; but the Huguenots, I must say, were rebels in arms, and they had sought the assistance of commanders of the Dutch and English fleets. The rising had become so alarming in 1703-04 that Villars was charged, if possible, to bring it to an end, and was despatched to Languedoc for this purpose. His conduct is not the least of his titles to renown; he flung himself, so to speak, between the furious combatants, and while he laid a heavy hand on the factions that abused the name of the king, he reduced the Huguenots by degrees to submission by making a few severe examples followed by most humane clemency. The province was, in less than a year, at rest; Villars received the thanks of the Assembly of the States.

The year 1704 had opened, a year that ought to have witnessed a great triumph for France, but that led to an overwhelming defeat to her arms. Its events have not been fully explained; but Villars made them a subject of special study. I shall repeat what I learned from the great Marshal, besides describing what I witnessed myself. Eugene, I have said, had left his army in Italy, and had repaired to Vienna to give his master counsel, when Villars and the Elector had joined hands; though a breathing time had been afforded in 1703, the empire was still in extreme peril. In this situation the question for the Grand Alliance was, how to prevent the fatal advance on Vienna, and to baffle or defeat the hostile armies; a plan of operations was formed by Marlborough and Eugene, which Villars always maintained was that of the prince; it bears the mark of his audacious but brilliant genius. This plan, broadly described, was to bring great forces of the Allies into Bavaria and there to attack the enemy; but how this was to be accomplished seemed all but impossible, for Villeroy held Marlborough in check on the Meuse; Tallard had a considerable army in Alsace, Baden and Styrum were far from each other and from the rest of the Allies. This grand movement, nevertheless, was accomplished, and that with extraordinary energy and skill, though but for a series of unfortunate events, it could not, humanly speaking, have been carried out with success. Marlborough broke up from Maastricht about the middle of May, at the head of perhaps 40,000 men, some 16,000 of these being English troops; he had artfully deceived the Dutch Commissioners, who still wished to detain him in the Low Countries; he eluded Villeroy, who remained in his camps near the Meuse, and having passed the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle, and received large German reinforcements

on the way, he ascended the Rhine and reached the Lower Neckar, after a march of remarkable boldness and speed. He met Eugene and Baden in the early days of June; Eugene by this time had replaced Styrum, and was approaching the Rhine with a few thousand men; Baden had perhaps 25,000 on the Upper Danube—they had not been attacked as they marched through Swabia—the allied chiefs arranged that Eugene was to collect all Styrum's forces, to move to, and to hold the lines of Stollhofen, in order to keep Tallard, and possibly Villeroy, in check; and that Marlborough was to press on to the Danube, and to effect his junction with Baden north of the great river. Marlborough, having again marched with admirable speed, passed from the valley of the Neckar into that of the Upper Danube, he had joined Baden by the last week of June; the united armies were probably 80,000 strong; Bavaria was even now threatened. The Elector and Marsin had simply done nothing up to this; they seem to have been taken by surprise; they assembled, however, some 40,000 men, and placed a considerable detachment on the Schellenberg, a height near the chief passage at Donauwerth on this part of the Danube. This height, however, had not been fortified, as Villars had recommended over and over again; it was stormed after a fierce resistance; the unfortunate detachment was almost destroyed. Marlborough and Baden now hastened across the Danube; the enemy did not attempt to fight; at the head of forces greatly superior in numbers they were soon wasting Bavaria with fire and sword.

Happily I had no part in the fight on the Schellenberg—I was leagues away with the main army; had it been otherwise I could hardly have written these memoirs. The enemies had gained an enormous advantage; they had penetrated into the

depths of Bavaria, an achievement that might have been deemed impossible, the situation had already been completely changed. But why did not the Elector and Marsin fall on Baden before he could reach the Upper Danube? why did they allow themselves to be surprised by Baden and the English commander? These faults were grave, but were less grave than those which were committed on the Meuse and the Rhine. Villeroy should not have let Marlborough pass out of his sight, but he properly followed the English chief. He effected his junction with Tallard upon the Lauter, at the very time when the allied generals were on the Neckar planning the great march to the Danube. The marshals were fully 70,000 strong; they were directly on the flank of Marlborough's army. Had they crossed the Rhine they might either have compelled Marlborough to accept a battle, where a defeat would have been fatal to him, or they might have fallen on his communications and forced him to retreat. They did not, however, make any movement, but the situation for Marlborough was critical in the extreme; and, though risks must always be run in war, Villars often told me that the risk then run was too great, and that Marlborough could never have attained the Danube had his adversaries done what was their obvious duty.[1] The other operations of the marshals in this part of the campaign were tentative, feeble, and, above all, too late, but there is reason to believe that they were hampered by orders from Versailles, the king directing everything, though far from the theatre of the war. Villeroy was ordered to observe and to attack

[1] My kinsman's comments, no doubt inspired by Villars, are borne out by Marlborough himself—*Despatches*, I., pp. 304, 306, 307, and *see* Coxe *in loco*. Marlborough knew the danger he was in, but braved it, man of genius as he was, to gain a great object.—EDITOR.

Eugene, by this time safe in the lines of Stollhofen, where he had assembled perhaps 30,000 men, having had at first a few thousand only. Tallard was ordered to march from the Rhine to the Danube, and to join hands with the Elector and Marsin, when the movements of Marborough and Baden were being developed. But Villeroy did not cross the Rhine until the first week of July. Tallard was not on his way to the Danube until about the same time. Meanwhile Eugene was entrenched in a very strong position, and Marlborough and Baden were laying Bavaria waste. The powers of Eugene and Marlborough cannot be questioned. A fine plan had been most admirably carried out; but the French commanders had thrown away and lost great opportunities, which ought to have secured them success.

While Villeroy and Tallard were thus wasting invaluable time, Marlborough and Baden had harried Bavaria, carrying the war to the gates of Munich and Augsburg; they had hardly been molested by their terrified foes. Tallard, however, had meanwhile been following the march of Villars through the Black Forest, in order to reach the heads of the Danube. His army was perhaps 40,000 strong. He had joined the Elector and Marsin, near Augsburg, in the first days of August. At this moment Marlborough was in the Paar, a feeder of the Danube, only a few marches distant; he was now very inferior to his enemies in force, and Baden was about to proceed to lay siege to Ingoldstadt. The two chiefs, it would seem, were not yet aware that Tallard, the Elector and Marsin had united their forces, and could fall on Marlborough with greatly superior numbers. Why, Villars used to say, was he not attacked and beaten? The Elector and his colleagues took a different course;

they made from Augsburg to the Upper Danube, and crossed the river at Lawingen and Dillengen. Their object apparently was to interpose between Marlborough, Baden and Eugene, and to compel the two first to make a disastrous retreat out of Bavaria. This project was frustrated by Marlborough and Eugene in a series of operations that deserve the highest praise, save that Eugene made a mistake that ought to have cost him dear. Eugene had been informed of the march of Tallard. He knew that his colleagues in Bavaria might be placed in sore straits. He had taken the measure of Villeroy in his front, leaving a detachment only to hold the marshal in check, he had broken up from the lines of Stollhofen, had marched through the lands of Wurtemberg with astonishing speed, at the head of an army of about 20,000 men, in order to support his allies in Bavaria, and he had reached the Upper Danube, near Donauwerth, a few days only before the enemy had crossed the river at Lawingen and Dillengen. He placed a large part of his troops upon the Kessel, a little stream not two marches distant from the hostile camps. He then hastened to confer with Marlborough, and to arrange the operations they were to conduct together. Marlborough, leaving Baden to carry on the siege of Ingoldstadt—the prince probably could not be recalled in time—made for the Danube in another most admirable march. He had got over the river by the night of the 11th of August. Eugene's army on the Kessel had come into line with his own. But Eugene's army had been exposed for two or three days to enemies immensely superior in strength, who ought to have annihilated it on the spot; the Elector and the French chiefs had made a capital mistake in not striking a blow that might have had prodigious results. Eugene's conduct, in fact, was

one of the instances of the rashness sometimes apparent in his splendid career. "We taught him at Dénain," Villars often said, "not to play tricks such as these when he had to deal with myself."

By this time the two French and the Bavarian armies had advanced along the Danube, beyond Höchstädt, the scene of the battle lately won by Villars, and were encamped in a region of villages, thickets and plains, the last watered by the marshes and the stream of the Nebel, and extending from Eichberg on the extreme left to Blenheim on the extreme right, a distance of more than three English miles. I had been transferred from the staff of Marsin to that of Tallard, and was not sorry to see again a chief less to be blamed than his colleagues for the disaster that followed. A council of war, I have heard, was held; Tallard gave weighty reasons for not running the risks of a battle. His cavalry had suffered much from fatigue and disease; reinforcements were on their way to the Danube; it would surely be better to wait until the armies were ready and strengthened; then would be the time to fall on Marlborough and Eugene, who would certainly be inferior in numbers, and were isolated in the midst of an unfriendly country. The Elector, however, would not listen to his good advice; he was maddened by the devastation of his prosperous lands; he insisted on fighting as soon as possible; Marsin, a time-server, took the side of the prince. It was finally agreed that the united armies should either attack the enemy, or, as Tallard proposed, should try to reach his communications at Nordlingen and compel him to retreat; this movement would certainly place him in difficult straits. But the French and Bavarian chiefs had not fathomed the capacity and daring of Marlborough and Eugene.

Both knew that they were in no doubtful peril;[1] but they knew that they were probably at this moment as strong as their foes; they resolved instantly to assail the adversaries in their front before the hostile forces in the field could be largely increased; the decision was worthy of the two great captains. In the early morning of the 13th of August, the day on which our movement was to begin, our outposts descried the enemy advancing in dense masses through the defiles of Dapfhein towards the flats round the Nebel; a great battle was evidently at hand. Our armies took the positions they were to defend; they continued to be two quite distinct armies; that under the Elector and Marsin, the left wing, numbering probably 20,000 men, held the villages of Eichberg and Oberglau and the space between; that under Tallard, the centre and right wing, was probably about 32,000 strong, and extended from Oberglau to the extreme right at Blenheim, a village resting upon the Danube. The front of the Elector and Marsin was protected by woodland and villages, which formed good points of vantage; the Nebel and its wide marshes covered the front of Tallard, and seemed to form an obstacle that could not be overcome; Tallard, who unfortunately had very bad sight, had made up his mind that an enemy could not force the passage; this, sad to say, was to prove otherwise. The Marshal arrayed his army in an assumption that was to turn out false. He placed about 18,000 of his best troops in Blenheim, the key of the whole position he believed; he distributed the rest, to a great extent cavalry, from Blenheim to Oberglau, a distance of more than a

[1] Marlborough note Saxe I., p. 88: "I knew the danger, but a battle is absolutely necessary, and I rely on the bravery and discipline of the troops." His conduct and that of Eugene may be compared to that of Napoleon before Austerlitz.—EDITOR.

mile and a half, this thin and far-spreading line being, he supposed, fully protected by the Nebel and its swamps in its front. The two armies, I have heard, were each about 52,000 strong; we certainly were superior in guns; but we had much fewer horsemen, and many squadrons were not equal to a great trial of strength.

It was after noon when the enemy's armies had reached our positions and had begun the attack. Marlborough confronted Tallard with superior forces; Eugene, with inferior, confronted the Elector and Marsin. A heavy fire was opened on Blenheim, and the village was more than once assaulted; but the defenders easily threw the assailants back; the position was much too strong to be stormed; our guns made terrible havoc of the advancing columns. It is difficult to suppose that this was not a false attack; Marlborough, whose judgment on the field was perfect, probably wished to detain Tallard's forces in Blenheim, while he was making everything ready for the decisive effort. He had learned, it is said, from an officer in Styrum's army, that it was possible, if difficult, to cross the Nebel; at all events he had determined to force the passage; he directed great masses of foot and of horsemen, skilfully arrayed, against the weak and extended line of Tallard, where it was completely covered, it was supposed, by the stream and its marshes. The attacks were unsuccessful for a time; Marlborough's troops, indeed, made their way across the obstacle; but they were charged with great effect by the French cavalry, and more than once they were driven back, beaten. Marlborough, however, persistently urged the weighty onslaught; Tallard, who had ridden to the spot and saw that his forces were too small, sent me and other officers of his staff to entreat Marsin to reinforce his already imperilled

centre. When I had reached Oberglau I beheld a fine exploit of our race; the regiments of Lord Clare had issued from the village and had overwhelmed every enemy in their path; Marlborough was compelled to come to the rescue of his shattered troops; he restored the battle with difficulty; but ere long he received the support of a body of cavalry, detached by his chivalrous colleague, to his aid; our men who had recklessly pressed too far forward were repulsed with much loss. Meanwhile I had adjured Marsin to send assistance to his hard-pressed colleague; the Marshal—a very different man from Eugene—declared that he could not spare a man, he was so fiercely assailed by the prince; but this evasive reply was untrue; his army and that of the elector had much the better of the fight. I was returning, full of forebodings from my fruitless mission, when an appalling spectacle rose before my eyes. Marlborough had continued his attack with unflagging energy; the great body of his army was over the Nebel at last, and had formed for a mighty final effort; the exhausted French cavalry made a feeble resistance, though supported by a few thousand infantry, and gave way in precipitate rout; the weak centre of Tallard was pierced through and broken. The enemy poured in force through the gap that had been opened, and spread confusion and terror far and near; the plain as far as Höchstädt was covered with fugitives in despair; Tallard and many of his chief officers were made prisoners. I made my escape as I best could; I was pursued by three or four red-coated troopers; but I plunged with my horse into the Danube hard by; and I scrambled up, after a struggle, on the further bank.

My drenched charger, accustomed to all that is seen in war, was soon quietly feeding on the meadow on the spot. It was otherwise with myself, who,

unable to do anything, was obliged passively to watch the hideous scenes of the rout. The day was now far spent; but by the light of the summer afternoon, I beheld another spectacle even more dreadful than that which I had beheld before; it tortured, so to speak, my fascinated gaze; it caused my frame to writhe in impotent agony. Blenheim was gradually surrounded by the enemy's troops; Marlborough's infantry, leaving the pursuit to the cavalry, had evidently been turned aside to attack the village; other troops, having crossed the Nebel, attacked the place in front. The army, as it may be called, that was shut up within the fatal trap, made for some time a heroic resistance; I could see the advancing columns more than once driven back; our guns were plied with deadly effect. But Marlborough's batteries were brought to bear on their doomed victims; their concentrated fire made frightful havoc; Blenheim, smitten by a tempest of shells, was before long in flames. Hundreds of our soldiers flung themselves into the Danube, and many were drowned or slain as they tried to cross; Alphonse de Bacquancourt, Estelle's brother, happily made his escape; he had been fighting all the day in Blenheim, at the head of a company in the historic regiment of Navarre. After about an hour of this horrible struggle, a pause in the conflict manifestly took place; ere long the exulting cheers of the victors swelled high; thousands of disarmed men could be descried marching out of Blenheim—the Navarres had broken their muskets and burned their colours—all were surrounded by a number of English squadrons. The imprecations and shouts of the captives rang through the troubled air, but of what avail was bootless despair and fury? the best troops of France had laid down their arms and were lost to their king. I heard the tale of this part of the battle

from several companions-in-arms; it was a tale of woe, perhaps of disgrace; but it bore witness to Marlborough's great capacity on the field. He detached a large body of cavalry after the defeat of Tallard, to fall on the Elector's and Marsin's army, now retreating, for the battle had been plainly lost; but he just missed his intended quarry; the Elector and Marsin got off safely; they were not hardly pressed even by Eugene. The greater part of Marlborough's army, I have said, encompassed Blenheim; and the attack, persistently driven home, led to the final appalling surrender. I have often heard the subject discussed; many officers have declared that our army had no choice but to succumb as it did; but Villars indignantly denied this: the troops, he insisted, ought to have fought to the last; if thousands had perished, thousands would probably have broken through the enemy's circle at some point, at all events military honour would have been saved.[1]

The losses of our enemies at Blenheim were great; but Tallard's army was simply destroyed; the Elector and Marsin lost many thousands of men.

[1] My kinsman is quite correct. Villars, *Mémoires*, II., p. 338, the Vogué edition, wrote this to a friend:—"C'est dans ces occasions où il faut repondre aux imbécilles, qui disent que pouvoit on faire de mieux

'Qu'il mourust,
On qu'n beau désespoir alors le secourust.'

L'infanterie espagnolle a Rocroy n'aima-t-elle pas mieux périr que de demander quartier? Le soldat et l'officier ne doit il pas préférer une mort glorieuse, cherchant à se faire jour par la bayonette au bout du fusil, à l'ignominie de périr de faim et de misère dans des prisons. Je suis honteux et penetré pour la nation d'une reddition aussy lasché." Napoleon was equally emphatic, *Corr.*, 32, 213:—"Si les vingt-huit bataillons, troupe d'élite, qui posèrent les armes à Hoechstaedt, eussent été convancus qu'ils entachaient leurs noms, fletrissaient leurs familles, encouraient la peine d'être décimés, ils se fussent battus; et si leur obstination n'eût pas fait changer les destins de la journée, ils eussent certainement régagné l'aile gauche et fait leur retraite." Napoleon was thinking of Baylen; what would he have said of the surrenders of Metz and Sedan?—EDITOR.

It has been said that the three armies were weakened by 40,000 soldiers, including the killed, wounded, prisoners of war and deserters; two Bavarian regiments went over to Eugene. France had not met such a disaster since Pavia and St Quentin, perhaps not since the old feudal battles of Creçy and Agincourt. Yet the injury done to her renown was far worse than what she suffered in the field; she had been supreme in war for fully half a century; she was now humbled and in an abyss of misfortune. The contest that had been fought on the Danube rolled suddenly to the far-distant Moselle; such a transformation on the theatre had never been witnessed before. The beaten French and Bavarian armies fled to the Rhine, through the Black Forest; Villeroy rallied them, but fell back into Alsace; Eugene, Marlborough and Baden, leaving Ingolstadt and Ulm to fall, took Landau, and Marlborough occupied Trèves, preparing to invade Lorraine and France in the coming year. Such were the events of the memorable campaign of 1704, the most calamitous perhaps of the whole war. Yet, as Villars repeatedly argued, the chances were on the side of France; she ought to have had at the outset a signal triumph for her arms; almost up to the last moment she ought to have been successful; her disasters were caused by most untoward accidents. A great captain would have seized Vienna in the beginning of the year; the Elector and Marsin were culpably weak in Bavaria; Villeroy and Tallard should have stopped Marlborough as he made for the Danube. Eugene should not have been allowed to join hands with his colleague, and should have been cut off when upon the Kessel; had Tallard's counsels been followed, Blenheim could hardly have been fought. The disposition, too, of our army at Blenheim was faulty; the Elector and Marsin were too strong;

Tallard was distinctly inferior to Marlborough in force; he wrongly placed more than half his soldiers in Blenheim, he made his line on the Nebel too weak, perhaps owing to his very imperfect eyesight. But all this does not in the least detract from the magnificent achievements of Marlborough and Eugene; they carried out admirably a very difficult plan, plucking safety, as it has been said, from danger; their decision in making the attack at Blenheim was beyond praise; Marlborough's conduct of the battle may be described as perfect. Villars was wont to dwell on another feature of the campaign; the armies of our enemies, as had never been the case before, were better organised and more effective than the French army, now in decline, and failing in the hands of an incapable minister. The events of the war, in its other theatres, were not of much importance; everything, so to speak, was swallowed up in Blenheim. Berwick gained partial success in Portugal, which he invaded with the young King of Spain; but Gibraltar was taken by an English admiral; and though France, it is said, won a victory at sea near Malaga, her maritime power was yielding to that of the Dutch and of England. In the Low Countries simply nothing was done; Vendôme took a few places in the territory of the Duke of Savoy; he was seconded by a French army from across the Alps. But Eugene's army had not been driven out of Italy; ere long the results were to be made too manifest.

## CHAPTER VII

I HAD joined the wreck of Tallard's army after the rout of Blenheim. I had not yet seen such a pitiable sight in war, though I had witnessed the days of the Boyne and of Aghrim. Not 6000 men of the marshal's army had escaped, we had saved hardly a gun and scarcely any munitions; our little body of horsemen were half dismounted, our infantry had lost or thrown away part of their arms; we had abandoned our wounded soldiery on the fatal field. The march to the Rhine and the Moselle was a woeful spectacle; many stragglers and deserters left our ranks; we found hardly any supplies on our way, for no preparations had been made in the expectation of a defeat. Hundreds of men perished in the defiles of the Black Forest, though no enemy was upon our track. Worse than all, discipline had completely disappeared; the famishing troops, defying their officers, gave way to pillage; we were a worthless horde when we met the army of Villeroy. I think we had not 3000 men together; these were sent into winter quarters to recruit their exhausted strength. Having been on the staff of Tallard, I had no regimental duties to perform. I was allowed to join my wife and her family in their Norman home. Estelle by this time had borne me a son, now, for years, a major in our renowned Brigade. I found her and her kinsfolk in good health, but, though her sweet society was balm to a wounded spirit, I could not shake off from my mind the fearful scenes I had beheld. Blen-

heim had brought sorrow to many a hearth of our neighbours; the churches were filled with sad figures in mourning; the joyous meetings and festivities of a happier time had ceased. But, like France and her people, the Normans had not lost heart; in every parish the seigneurs assembled their vassals and bade them flock to the king's armies; a brave peasantry nobly answered the call; hundreds of youths had soon joined the recruiting parties, which had been sent far and near to bring in men to our standards. Ere long I had received a letter from Villars. Tallard had written from England, where he was a prisoner of war—he had been treated by Marlborough with characteristic tact—highly praising my conduct in the terrible fight, and urging Villars again to place me on his staff; Villars summoned me with the kindness I have always experienced at his hands. I found my chief in his hotel in Paris, which had been a part of his wife's great dowry. He had been welcomed by Louis at Versailles, and had been made a Duke for his services in Languedoc; he was now engaged in preparing for the campaign at hand. The maréchale told me, with pardonable pride, that the unfortunate Elector of Bavaria, after his flight from Blenheim, had sped to Versailles to have an audience of the king, and had told her that had he followed her husband's advice the disasters that had befallen our arms could never have occurred.

Being now on the staff of Villars, I was despatched to examine the troops being assembled for the army he was to lead into the field. I visited several great depots; the spectacle France presented was truly grand, yet it was not equal to that of our race in 1689-91. The main roads were crowded with recruits hastening to join the sacred lilies; they generally were in high heart, they used to sing and dance when they halted at night; the old soldiery were

frantic to avenge Blenheim. The king, too, and his Court had not spared themselves; quantities of the royal plate had been melted down to furnish silver and gold to the failing Treasury; the *noblesse* readily paid what is called a poll tax, ere long they had fitted out many battalions and squadrons at their own charge for the crown. France, in a word, if reeling from a tremendous shock, and even now suffering from financial distress, and from the exhaustion of which she had long shown symptoms, still heroically confronted the League of Europe; she was still determined to carry on the war, she stamped her proud foot and called legions out of her soil. Before the spring of 1705 had come her forces had been restored, in numbers at least; they were probably not less than those of her enemies, intoxicated as they were with their late triumph. A considerable body of troops was sent across the Pyrenees to support Berwick and Philip V.; another large reinforcement crossed the Alps to the aid of Vendôme, who, it was hoped, would be strong enough to crush the faithless Duke of Savoy, and to drive Eugene far beyond the Adige. Villeroy, still most unfortunately kept in command, was entrusted with a great army in the Low Countries; Marsin was given another army to defend the frontiers of Alsace. For the first time in the course of the war the principal part on the stage of events was assigned to my illustrious chief, though still beset by detractors at Versailles. Villars was directed to confront Marlborough on the Moselle, and to save France and Lorraine from invasion—the Duke of Lorraine was, secretly, a friend of the Allies—the marshal's army was perhaps 60,000 strong. The elements, however, that made up the new armies of France were very different from those which existed even at the beginning of the war. Many excellent regiments were still intact,

especially the Maison du Roi and the King's Foot Guards, who had remained far from every theatre of the war. Some of the "old regiments" too—the flower of the infantry—had not left France. But the mass of these new armies was composed of rude levies, in fact of the feudal militia of a bygone time; the great majority of the officers were young and ill-trained; the cavalry were largely raw and ill-mounted; the scientific arms especially were bad—for there had been a traffic in commissions that did much harm; the troops were not well provided for the field, as, indeed, under the *régime* of Chamillart, had been the case before. Nevertheless these forces, with the admixture of good soldiers in their ranks, were formidable, and had an imposing aspect; they possessed the aptitude of their race for war; they were to do a great deal more than their enemies ever expected.

The Grand Alliance, meanwhile, had been making ready to deal what it believed would be a mortal blow to France, and to compel the great king to submit to a humiliating peace. The conquests he had made in the Low Countries were to be wrested from him; Alsace and Strasbourg were to go back to the empire; the work of Richelieu, Mazarin and Turenne was to be undone. The exultation of the League passed all rational bounds; medals were struck commemorating the fall of Louis XIV.; scandalous libels were published in the gazettes of the Dutch. As for Marlborough, he was extolled to the skies by a nation which, beyond every other, bows down to success. I do not deny that his honours were now well earned; he received the thanks of the Parliament with one voice of acclaim; a great estate of the crown was bestowed on him by the queen, really a royal vassal of the duke and his wife. At the same time great efforts were made to

bring the war, as was expected, to a glorious close. Two hundred and fifty thousand men and more were to take the field; the tale was disseminated throughout France; Marlborough was to descend on France and Lorraine from the Moselle, her weakest frontier, like that of the Meuse; 100,000 good troops were to be under his command. Large reinforcements meanwhile were to march into Italy, where Eugene's army was outnumbered by that of Vendôme; Villeroy was to be held in check in the Low Countries; a great attack was to be made on the young ruler of Spain. The Archduke Charles, who, it will be borne in mind, was to have the chief part of the monarchy, under the Second Partition Treaty, had landed in Portugal after a showy welcome in England; he had been proclaimed by the League the lawful monarch of Spain; he was to have the support of a great allied force. Nevertheless the armies the Allies sent into the field were, I am convinced, less numerous than they boasted throughout Europe. The Emperor Leopold died in the spring; he was succeeded by his son Joseph, the young King of the Romans; this caused delays in the Imperial Councils. Baden, who was to have an army on the Rhine, was notably weak; the rising of Hungary was still menacing. There were murmurs, too, I have heard, among the German princes; they were clamouring for the monies of the Dutch and of England; the contingents they sent into the field were comparatively small. On the whole, prodigious as their success had been, the armies of the Allies were hardly more numerous than those of the great king; the contrast between a coalition and a single powerful monarch was plain. "Do they imagine," Villars used to exclaim, "that France will be stricken down by one defeat, the causes of which were evident to any true soldier?"

By the early spring of 1705 my chief and his army were upon the Moselle. He had reconnoitred the frontier with the greatest care, being satisfied as to his enemy's purpose; he took a strong position near the little fortress of Sierck, between Thionville and Sarre Louis, in the midst of a country admirably adapted to defence. His army, I have said, was about 60,000 troops, but he had only some 55,000 in his hands; he had sent a detachment to cover the approaches to Sarre Louis. His men were to a great extent recruits, but Villars possessed in an extraordinary degree the genius which gives a soldier boldness and confidence; here he was fully the equal of Condé and Turenne. It is very remarkable that, on this occasion, he did not place his army behind entrenchments; no general has ever made better use of defensive lines, but he relied on the natural obstacles of the ground; lines, he used to say, checked the *furia française*, in the old Italian phrase. Marlborough had arrived at Trèves by the middle of May; we learned from spies and deserters that he had detached considerable forces to observe Villeroy on the Meuse, and that the Dutch had insisted on this protection; but we learned, also, that he was ready to advance to the Moselle at the head of at least 80,000 men. This great force, however, was to be largely composed of German contingents and of the army of Baden, confronted by Marsin upon the Rhine; the junction of the hostile armies was by no means assured. Marlborough, nevertheless, made confident by his triumph at Blenheim, crossed the Moselle, where it met the Sarre, in the first days of June, and was soon advancing through the difficult country where his adversary had his army in hand. Delicate courtesies passed between the two chiefs; Villars certainly was not afraid of Marlborough; but if he deemed himself a

match for his opponent in the field, he used to acknowledge that his gracious suavity in his correspondence was above all praise. Marlborough endeavoured for some days to lure Villars into fighting a great battle; he made feints and demonstrations of many kinds, especially against the stronghold of Sarre Louis; but my chief felt that he could keep his enemy in check; he declined a decisive trial of strength with consummate prudence. To our astonishment Marlborough's army was seen to be in full retreat at the beginning of the third week of June; before long he had fallen back on Trèves. We heard that this movement was due to the illwill of Baden, who could not, or would not, stir from the Rhine; indeed, a tale ran the rounds of our camps that Marlborough had sent a flag of truce to Villars to complain of the prince's conduct, but this, I am convinced, was a mere fable.[1] For the rest, I believe that the army of the English chief was not superior in numbers to our own;[2] I gathered this from repeatedly reconnoitring his troops; if so, Marlborough acted rightly in not remaining where he was. But Villars was justly elated that the victor of Blenheim had been baffled in an enterprise on which he had set his heart. Many years afterwards the great marshal placed on canvas a record of an achievement of which he was especially proud. I have often seen the picture in his château at Vaux. This was the first, it was not to be the last, check Villars gave Marlborough in his magnificent career.

My chief, overjoyed at his late exploit, resolved to carry the war across the Rhine, and to invade Ger-

[1] My kinsman's surmise is, I believe, correct. The story is told even in the genuine edition of the *Mémoires* of Villars, II., p. 186; but Marlborough was incapable of the alleged conduct, though he was certainly indignant with Baden.—EDITOR.

[2] Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, I., p. 278, has shown that the duke's army, when he confronted Villars, did not exceed 42,000 men.—EDITOR.

many as far as the lands of Baden. He drove hostile detachments out of Trèves, proposed to the king to recapture Landau, and successfully got over the Rhine not far from Strasbourg, on the theatre of the last campaign of Turenne. He was prevented, however, from giving effect to his purpose; whole divisions of his army, and of that of Marsin, were ordered to march into the Low Countries, where affairs were taking a turn unfavourable to France; meanwhile Baden had been strongly reinforced; Villars was obliged to recross the Rhine and to place his army in winter quarters around Strasbourg. I heard from an old comrade on Marsin's staff a vague description of what occurred in the Netherlands, but I had not the means of following events in detail. In the absence of Marlborough, when on his way to the Moselle, Villeroy, very superior in numbers to any enemy in his front, had taken Huy and the city of Liège; the Dutch began to clamour for the return of Marlborough; this, no doubt, was one cause of his retreat from the Moselle. The English commander had soon retaken Huy; he was at the head of probably 60,000 men; he intended to force Villeroy to fight a great battle. Villeroy, though, it would seem, not inferior in strength, took refuge behind great defensive lines which had been constructed to cover Brabant and Flanders; they formed a barrier extending from Namur to Antwerp, and were deemed to be a masterpiece of engineering skill; they were protected by obstacles of all kinds, inundations, field works, stockades and fortresses. Marlborough, however, successfully forced the lines in a series of operations worthy of his powers; he detached a large body of troops to menace Villeroy's extreme right; this induced the marshal to follow the movement and to send reinforcements to parry what was really a feint; the English commander,

seizing the most vulnerable point, attacked the lines near the sources of the Lesser Gheete, and stormed them after a rather feeble defence. Villars has often told me that his colleague had spread his army over too many parts of the lines, but, as I have said, he did not approve of this system;[1] indeed, I shall tell afterwards how his own famous lines were turned, though his antagonist gained no real advantage. The other events in the Low Countries have not been completely explained; in their ultimate results they were disastrous to France. Marlborough pursued his adversary to the walls of Louvain, but for some reason he was unable to cross the Dyle; he then marched towards the heads of the river and tried to bring the marshal to bay near the Forest of Soignies. Here, however, he was again baffled; it has been surmised that, as was the case before, Dutch commissioners and generals wrecked his projects. The campaign had no decisive results; Villeroy had, in the long run, held Marlborough in check; this and his notorious boastings deceived the king, still eager to support an unworthy favourite; the consequences were to be in the highest degree unfortunate.

Beyond the Pyrenees the issue of the campaign was ultimately of evil omen for France. Whether in Italy or in Spain the Government of Philip V. had never, I have heard, 30,000 regular troops in the field, though the destinies of the monarchy were at stake. Spain, in fact, was in a worse state of decrepitude than Louis XIV. and his Council had believed possible; her alliance with that of France was a dead tied to a living body—what Father Nicholas had

[1] My kinsman is perfectly accurate. *See* Villars's *Mémoires*, the Vogué edition II., p. 190:—"Le Maréchal de Villars avoit toujours été fort opposé à cette manière de tourner la guerre en défense de ligues; il l'estimoit très dangereuse et, en effet, l'expérience a fait voir que les lignes ont toujours été forcées." For the reason *see* I., pp. 131, 132.—EDITOR.

described as a "Mezentian Union." Berwick, however, lately made a Marshal of France and gradually acquiring deserved renown, defended the frontier for months on the side of Portugal, but he was recalled owing, I have heard, to a quarrel with the young Queen of Spain, another daughter of the treacherous Duke of Savoy. Charles III.—the Pretender, as he was called in France, as the son of James II. was called the Pretender in England—and the Allies had no success in the interior of Spain; the people of the Castiles especially detested a cause which for them was that of the foreigner and of vile heretics. But in the east of the monarchy a disaster occurred; this was most injurious to the prospects of Philip V. The mountaineers of Catalonia, known as the Catalans, had been for many years at feud with the Castilians, the dominant race in Spain; they had become alienated from the French, their ancient friends; these sentiments spread through the kingdom of Aragon. The Allies took advantage of the movement; Charles III., disembarking from a great English fleet which had had the command of the Mediterranean for a considerable time, laid siege to Barcelona, a great stronghold on the Catalonian coast; no assistance came from France either by land or by sea; the place fell after a neighbouring height had been stormed. Catalonia instantly rose in arms against the King of Spain; the rising spread through Aragon and the Valencian kingdom.

Though nothing decisive had been accomplished in Italy, the prospect of the war was big with promise for France at the close of the campaign of 1705. By the winter of 1704, Eugene's army had retreated to the Upper Adige; it had never been equal to that of the enemy; it was now probably less than 20,000 strong. Meanwhile, Vendôme had been given the supreme command of the French

army, which had crossed the Alps, and of the army in Italy, of which he had been the head. He had perhaps from 50,000 to 60,000 men. The operations that followed were of much interest. Villars was wont often to dwell on them. They gave proof of the capacity of Vendôme when at his best. They illustrated the activity and the boldness of Eugene. Vendôme laid siege to Chivasso, an outwork of Turin. Meantime Eugene, considerably reinforced, had descended from the lands of Trent to the Mincio, in order to make his way into the Lombard plains. The prince had now perhaps 30,000 men. Vendôme hastened from Chivasso to stop his antagonist, and to prevent him passing the line of the Mincio. A series of admirable manœuvres ensued. Eugene tried to turn Vendôme by the Brescian lands, but Vendôme established his army behind the Chiese and returned to carry on the siege. He left his brother, known as the Grand Prior, in command, a man who surpassed Vendôme in excess and vice, and had not a ray of the genius of that really able chief. The opportunity was seized by Eugene with characteristic insight and resource. He issued from Brescia, eluding the Grand Prior, at this time in one of his long fits of drunkenness. He flew across the Oglio and reached the Adda, his evident object being to join the Duke of Savoy. Vendôme hurried from his siege to confront his enemy. The Grand Prior, completely out-manœvured, was far in the rear of Eugene. The prince made a forced march down the Adda, hoping to meet and to annihilate the Grand Prior's army, now very inferior in numbers to his own. Vendôme just averted a disastrous defeat. He came up with Eugene at Cassano upon the Adda, when the two French armies were endeavouring to unite. A bloody and well-contested battle was fought, but the

fruits of victory remained with Vendôme. The Grand Prior was sent off in disgrace to France. Eugene was compelled to fall back to the Adige. Vendôme placed his army between the Adige and the Oglio, opposing a barrier to a much weaker enemy, and confident that Turin would soon be within his grasp. The fortunes of France had been successful, but Eugene had not given up the great game of war. He was ere long to show how a master could play it in a grand passage of arms.

France had not been victorious in the late campaign; but, if sorely pressed, she had held her own. The hopes of the Grand Alliance had been frustrated. The hunters, in fact, as the old saying is, had disposed of the bearskin before they had killed the bear. The great king and his people still defied them. As has usually happened in cases of the kind, the disappointment of the League had given rise to jealousies and disputes. These, I heard from Villars, were of evil omen for the time. Elated as the English were with the triumph of Blenheim, the Tory party in the Parliament, always well disposed to France, began to grumble and to lift its head. It resented the enormous cost of the war. The same complaints were echoed by the Dutch. The Emperor Joseph thought that Eugene had not had sufficient support in Italy. He was especially indignant with the new-made King of Prussia—he looked upon him as a mere crowned vassal — for not having his contingent in strength on the field. There was a quarrel between Queen Anne and the Electress of Hanover, whose son was the heir to the Crown of England. There was a great deal of dissension between the German princes. These jealousies and discords, my chief told me, with an admiration he did not seek to conceal, were composed by the skill and the resource of Marlborough. He travelled to Vienna,

to Berlin, to Hanover and to other capital towns. He contrived to keep the Allies together. His genius in diplomacy has seldom been made more manifest. The Allies had about the same forces on foot as they had had in the preceding year. France had, on the whole, increased her armies; her enthusiasm and her efforts had been prodigious. The plan of operations formed by the League was, ultimately, much the same as in 1705, except that France was not to be invaded—the lesson taught by Villars had not been forgotten—but rumours were current that Marlborough had been so incensed with the Dutch that he wished to co-operate with Eugene in Italy, and to attack France in her south-eastern frontier, through Dauphiné and Provençe. This design, however, was not carried out. Marlborough was to conduct the war in the Low Countries. Eugene was to descend from the Adige on Lombardy and, if possible, to join hands with the Duke of Savoy, now seriously alarmed for Turin; the cause of Charles III. was to be advanced in Spain. Louis XIV. made ready to oppose his enemies, but he made a capital mistake in his arrangements for the campaign. He left Villeroy in the Netherlands to cope with Marlborough, being deluded by the events of 1705. He employed Villars and Marsin in secondary operations in Alsace. For the rest, he expected that Vendôme in Italy would overpower Eugene, and that the fall of Turin was certain; and he sent Berwick again to Spain to support the arms of Philip V., for the moment in an inauspicious state, and to put down the insurrection in her eastern Provinces.

My chief was superior in command to Marsin; their armies had assembled near Strasbourg in the first months of 1706. The first object of Villars was to drive the enemy out of Alsace, but he had a more enlarged and grander object. He had ascertained

that Baden in his front was weak—the prince too was ill, and very near his end—the rising in Hungary had prevented his being reinforced; Villars had resolved to cross the Rhine, and even to march to the Upper Danube, for all Bavaria was in furious insurrection against the rule of the Austrians, who were treating it as a country given up to them as a spoil. Our troops had soon forced Baden to retreat; my chief rapidly advanced to the Rhine; I shall never forget how he obliged his colleague to make his way through the marshes along the river between Fort Louis and Drusenheim. Villars was now bent on laying siege to Landau, before invading Germany as his purpose was; but the king most unfortunately sent orders to Marsin to join Villeroy in the Low Countries; this paralysed Villars during the rest of the campaign. Marsin set off with perhaps 25,000 men; I was placed in temporary command of a regiment of horse, the vanguard of the forces being now detached; Villars, when he bade me farewell, was cross and full of forebodings. We marched as quickly as we could from the Rhine to the Meuse, taking in recruits at the great stronghold of Metz; my troopers were, for the most part, ill-horsed and young, but they were in high heart, and eager to meet their enemies. Villeroy, meanwhile, was making for the Meuse; Marlborough having, doubtless, been informed that Marsin was about to join his colleague, resolved to fall on Villeroy before this could be effected; he broke up from Tongres towards the middle of May, and, having crossed the historic field of Neerwinden, reached the watershed, as it is called, between the Mehaigne and the two Gheetes, a country of low hills, of thickets and marshes. Villeroy, hearing of his adversary's approach, continued his march; he had recklessly determined to accept a great trial of strength before Marsin had

come into line with him; this shameful presumption was to lead to a frightful disaster. I had crossed the Mehaigne and had reached the scene of the events at hand on the evening of the 22nd of May 1706, but not a fourth part of Marsin's army was on the spot; this was not good—cavalry without a single gun. By the light of the watch-fires we could see that Villeroy's army was assembled on the adjoining uplands, and that the enemy was in force in the valleys below.

It was the morning of the fateful 23rd, a day of humiliation and woe for France, but of a grand exhibition of skill on the part of her worst enemy. Villeroy arrayed his army on a wide front, extending from the Mehaigne on his right to the village of Autre Eglise on his left, a distance of more than three English miles; his position was apparently one of formidable strength. His extreme right was covered by the hamlet of Tavière on the Mehaigne; his centre by the villages of Ramillies and Offuz; his left by the village of Autre Eglise; his whole army held rising ground, and, especially on the left, was protected by all kinds of obstacles, low eminences, woodlands and the swamps of the Gheetes. The marshal placed a considerable force in Tavière, and a large body of his best cavalry on an old Roman road, which led directly into his lines; he strongly occupied Ramillies, Offuz and Autre Eglise; his left was held by comparatively few troops; it seemed absolutely impregnable to attack. Marlborough drew up his army on a much narrower front, from Bonneffe on his left to Foulz on his right, a distance of less than two miles; he seemed to have every disadvantage of the ground; his enemy could only be reached by mastering good points of defence. Villeroy and his officers believed they could repel any hostile effort; but I had learned war from an

illustrious master; there were two defects in the marshal's position, which a man like Marlborough, I feared, might turn to immense account. The English chief held the shorter lines on the whole scene of action; he was concentrated, while our army was dispersed; he could therefore combine his forces for attack more rapidly than Villeroy could for defence. But this was not the greatest defect; our left, no doubt, could hardly be assailed, the difficulties in the way were so great; but it could not make an attack in turn; it was passively bound to the ground it held; a mighty master of war as Marlborough was might therefore merely keep it in check with a petty force, and might detach from his right to support his main battle, thus gaining a preponderance of strength at the decisive points. In my early studies with Father Nicholas, I had read that this was what the Roman Consul Nero did at the great battle on the Metaurus, which changed the fortunes of the Second Punic War; it flashed across my mind that Marlborough might make a similar movement. The armies on either side were nearly equal in numbers, from 60,000 to 70,000 men; the guns were much more numerous than at Blenheim. Ours, probably, was the inferior army; it was crowded with recruits and beaten soldiers; but it contained the Maison du Roi, and some excellent cavalry. Marlborough's army was one of many races and tongues; but it was flushed with victory, and it had absolute trust in a chief who deserved it.

My regiment was placed in the second line of the cavalry, which, I have said, held the old Roman road, and extended far beyond it on either side. The first line was composed of the horsemen of the Maison du Roi and of the flower of the heavy cavalry of France; the Grey and the Black Musketeers, and the renowned gendarmes had the look that became

chosen and veteran soldiers. I descried, a few hundred yards to our left, the three regiments of our people, under Lord Clare; whether in victory at Höchstädt, or in defeat at Blenheim, they had been more than true to the standards of their adopted country. The battle began soon after noon by a heavy cannonade; here, I should think, we must have had the advantage; our batteries threw a destructive fire from the rising ground they occupied. But this was only the prelude of the fight; ere long I observed great bodies of our troops moving in the direction of Offuz and Autre Eglise; Marlborough had evidently attacked the left of our army, and Villeroy had made a detachment to give it support. The marshal, however, ought to have known that this was only a feint on the part of the enemy; our left could not be assailed with decisive effect; the only result of this false manœuvre was to weaken our centre, and in some measure to confuse our lines. Before long the real attack had developed itself; large bodies of men marched against Taviere; the village, rather too far from our main position, was stormed after a fine defence; reinforcements, sent by Villeroy too late, were almost cut to pieces. The loss of this outpost exposed the Roman road, the most vulnerable point of our whole battle; Marlborough, perceiving this with his unerring judgment, launched a great mass of cavalry against the cavalry of the defence, while a mass of infantry advanced to assail our right centre at Ramillies. The shock of the hostile squadrons as they met was terrific; for some moments we could hear nothing but the clash and the din of the *mêlée*, the cheers, the groans of the combatants, as the furious conflict eddied to and fro; our foremost line recoiled a short distance, but it was admirably seconded by our next line, which fell on the enemies as they pressed forward, on both their

flanks. Our horsemen had now the better of the fight; but soon we beheld fresh bodies of horsemen hastening to the relief of the half-defeated squadrons. Marlborough was at the head of this reserve of cavalry, no doubt, as I had feared, detached from his right, which really was in no kind of danger. I can still see him as, undaunted and serene, he rode forward amidst the cheers of his troops, shouting "Corporal John," the name they had given their hero; he was surrounded by his staff, evidently receiving his commands. I fell on his men with my whole regiment; he narrowly escaped being made prisoner—oh! that Heaven was so unpropitious to France—but he was extricated, and my troopers were compelled to retreat.

This terrible conflict continued for perhaps half an hour; the admirable dispositions of Marlborough ere long prevailed. Ever availing himself of the shorter distance on the field, and steadily detaching troops from his right—this had become apparent to our whole army—the English chief, as was the case at Blenheim, kept launching masses of men on the Roman road, the decisive point, while a large force was employed in attacking Ramillies. Villeroy endeavoured to avert the deadly strokes of his foe, by sending reinforcements to the scene of action; but they were invariably late and not in sufficient numbers. The pressure of overwhelming forces at last told; our double line of cavalry was driven back by degrees, and retreated on the infantry in their rear; at the same time Ramillies was stormed by the exulting enemy. Yet the Maison du Roi was worthy of its old renown; it was well-nigh cut to pieces before it fell back: the regiments of Lord Clare were half destroyed at Ramillies; their brave commander was wounded to death; his descendant was to avenge him on the plains of Fontenoy. The rest of our

cavalry did not do so well; like my own regiment, it was yielding before the retreat began; but Villeroy—I would do the unhappy chief justice—made noble efforts to encourage the disheartened troops; the Elector of Bavaria set as fine an example. Our right and centre were now drawing off the field, and making its way in fair order towards Louvain; the battle was lost, but as yet there had been no disaster; we ought to have been able to rally upon our left, which hitherto had remained intact. But this had not escaped Marlborough; he perceived that our left was feeling the influence of defeat, and that signs of wavering were apparent in its ranks; with admirable boldness and skill he directed the troops of his weakened right, to fall, at any risk or loss, on this wing of our army. We could descry the red-coated English columns, carried on by the flood-tide of success, and forcing their way through the thickets and swamps which covered the front of our line; Offuz and Autre Eglise were stormed at the first onset; resistance then almost wholly ceased. The troops seemed smitten by a fatal panic; battalions and squadrons suddenly gave way: this was the most deplorable event of the battle. Our left flung itself across the line of our retreat, and became entangled and commingled with the centre and the right; the contagion of terror spread through the whole army; it became unmanageable in the hands of its officers; all was soon a scene of confusion and despair. Our young soldiers disbanded in thousands, abandoning their comrades to the enemy in pursuit; the country was covered by a horde of fugitives; order, discipline, military worth disappeared. My regiment, which had fought very well, did not keep thirty men together; cannon, standards, muskets, all that makes an army a fighting power, were left scattered on the path of

that appalling rout. It was not the least of our misfortunes that the avenue of escape by Judoigne was closed by the wreck of the perishing host, which barred the way to the few troops who still kept to their colours.

This great catastrophe was due to three causes: Villeroy was guilty of an unpardonable fault in accepting battle before he was joined by Marsin; he arrayed his army with little skill on the ground. Marlborough turned his adversary's mistakes to the very best advantage. This victory was the crown of this great commander's career; it gives proof of more forethought and insight than Blenheim itself; the manœuvre by which Marlborough's right was detached to reinforce his left, and irresistible masses were directed on the decisive point, was the finest in the whole war of the Spanish Succession. Villars, I think, rather underrated Marlborough. He used to say that his English adversary was not the equal of Eugene in the great combinations of war; but Ramillies, he acknowledged, was a masterpiece: the battle was more than half won before a shot was fired. The events that followed the disaster almost baffle description; they were an appalling humiliation to the arms of France. The Allies after Blenheim did not press the pursuit. They had suffered much, and had the burden of a great mass of prisoners. But Marlborough, after Ramillies, did not give us a moment's respite. Our beaten and fugitive soldiery were literally hunted through the Low Countries. They were scattered into little knots and bands of men, ravaging villages and living on reckless pillage. As an instrument of war our army was broken to pieces. The march of the conquerors was not arrested by any of the river lines which divide this region. The Dyle, the Dender, the Scheldt, the Lys, were passed without

even an attempt at defence. The country from the Gheetes to the Lys was mastered in less than three weeks, an exploit without a parallel in war. Meanwhile fortress after fortress, city after city, threw open their gates, and made no resistance. This was partly the result of sheer terror, partly because the Netherlanders had become weary of the yoke of Spain and of France, and were willing to make an experiment of the rule of Charles III., the Pretender. As for myself, after doing all that I could to rally and reform my men, I found myself without a single follower; I made my way, as best I could, to Brussels, where kinsfolk of Estelle, I knew, were settled. I was hospitably received by these kind-hearted people. But, after taking a few days of rest, I was forced to leave the city, now about to surrender. I did not choose to fall into the hands of the Englishry. I would probably have been hanged as an Irish rebel. What faith had been kept with our race at Limerick? I put on the disguise of a peasant, and reached, with my horse, the town of Charleroy, where I found a detachment of Marsin's army. The marshal, on being informed of the late calamity, rightly directed his troops towards the borders of France, and was endeavouring to place the fortresses of Hainault in a state of defence.

In Italy another great disaster befell France, so full of woe was this unhappy year. Eugene, I have related, had been driven beyond the Adige at the close of the campaign of 1705. He ultimately retreated into the lands of Trent. Meanwhile Vendôme had placed his army behind the Chiese, believing that he could prevent the advance of the prince. He had detachments beside the Lake of Garda. He set off to observe the siege of Turin, being conducted by La Feuillade, a son-in-law of

Chamillart, a jealous and incapable officer. The events that followed were of great but of mournful interest. I have studied them under the eye of Villars. He considered the achievements of Eugene his masterpiece in war, though, but for the faults of his adversaries, they could not have been successful. Eugene, having been reinforced, broke up from Trent, in the spring of 1706, at the head of about 20,000 good troops. Finding the ordinary way into Lombardy barred, he repeated his fine manœuvre of 1701. He moved rapidly through the lands of Venice and crossed the Adige and the Po, where the mouths of the great rivers approach each other, sending a detachment to menace the line of the Mincio. Vendôme, like Catinat five years before, surprised and out-manœuvred by this skilful movement, marched in force to confront and throw back his enemy; but he was defeated with not inconsiderable loss. At this critical juncture he was ordered by the king to take the command of Villeroy, at last in disgrace, and to endeavour to restore the affairs of France in the Low Countries. The Duke of Orleans was made the successor of Vendôme. As Duke of Chartres he had proved himself to be a brave soldier, but he was an irresolute and uncertain chief. He had as his director the weak and incompetent Marsin. Against a man like Eugene the choice was of evil omen. Villars has told me that Vendôme had entreated the king to send Berwick to Italy to command in his stead; but the favouritism of Louis XIV., in this and in other instances, was to have the worst results. The Duke of Orleans reached the army in the middle of July. He sent a body of troops to keep the detachment on the Mincio in check. He made ready to give battle to Eugene. He urged La Feuillade to despatch reinforcements to

him. La Feuillade, however, shamefully refused; he declared that he could not spare a man from the siege. The French near the Mincio were defeated; the duke crossed to the northern bank of the Po: this false movement left the way along the southern bank open. Eugene, following the example of Sthranberg in 1703, but under conditions much more dangerous, advanced with extraordinary speed up the Po by this bank, his object being to join the Duke of Savoy, and to compel the raising of the siege of Turin. He found the Stradella Pass unguarded, though Vendôme had insisted it should be held in force; he joined his ally beyond the Tanaro, at a distance of a few marches from Turin.[1] The movement was one of astonishing daring and skill. Orleans had nothing to do but to retreat up the northern bank on Turin, where he came into line with La Feuillade and Marsin. He had left a considerable body of troops in Lombardy, supported by a few thousand of the soldiers of Spain.

La Feuillade, meanwhile, had been carrying on the siege of Turin for a considerable time. The illustrious Vauban, now near the close of his career, had proposed to the king to direct the attack; but he had insisted that the fortress should be fully invested; he required nearly 60,000 men to effect his purpose. Louis, yielding to the advice of Chamillart, who wished to secure a triumph for a worthless son-in-law, rejected the advice of the master of his art; the

[1] This march of Eugene was one of the most masterly ever made in war. It has fitly been compared to Napoleon's march down the Po in 1796. Napoleon thus refers to it, *Corr.* XXXI., p. 355. He is not quite accurate, but is always admirable in describing the main incidents :—"Le Prince Eugène, dans sa campagne de 1706, partit de Trente, longea la rive gauche de L'Adige, la passa devant une armee Française, remonta la rive gauche du Po, en pretant le flanc à son ennemi, passa le Tanaro devant le Duc d'Orléans, et joignit le Duc de Savoie sons Turin, où il tourna toutes les lignes Françaises, en attaquant la droite entre la Sesia et la Dora, et les força."—EDITOR.

besieging army was hardly 40,000 strong; the place was invested only on the northern bank of the Po; the besieged were thus enabled to prolong the defence and to obtain supplies from the adjoining country. The decline, besides, in our scientific arms, already observed, had become manifest; our engineers did their duty badly; there was not one good engineer in the whole army. The siege, accordingly, dragged slowly on. Meantime, Eugene had accomplished his grand movement, and, having effected his junction with the Duke of Savoy, was at the head of probably 50,000 men. When the Duke of Orleans had joined La Feuillade and Marsin, our whole forces may have been 70,000 strong; but they were within their lines conducting the siege, large detachments being on the southern bank of the Po. Eugene and his colleague, making a brilliant movement of great celerity and skilfully masked, reached the space between the Stura and the Dora, in the rear of the besieging force; this interval had not been protected by any works, for it had been assumed that the enemy would not attack. The Allies fell on our troops, still within their lines; contrary to the remonstrances of the Duke of Orleans, they had not marched out to fight under better conditions, but they successfully repulsed a first assault. Orleans again insisted on our army quitting its lines and giving battle in open ground, but he was overruled by the incapable Marsin; the army passively awaited a second attack. Eugene and Savoy, now reinforced, made another effort; they attacked our army on the 7th of September; it was probably inferior in numbers at the decisive point. After a brave defence, the lines were stormed and carried; Marsin was slain, Orleans was rather badly wounded. The whole siege train fell into the hands of the victors, but the defeat was not as yet calamitous; the army

might have been rallied on the southern bank of the Po; it was, as a whole, superior in force to the enemy. Orleans, wounded as he was, was for taking this course, but he again yielded to the counsels of a weak subordinate; he retreated in sorry flight towards the Alpine frontier of France, abandoning the detachment he had left in Lombardy. This was a pusillanimous and an utterly false movement; a few days after the siege of Turin had been raised, the detachment had gained a complete victory over the troops Eugene had left on the Mincio; but it was ultimately overpowered and forced to make terms, Eugene having marched against it in inevitable force. Orleans, in the meantime, had fallen back through the passes of the Alps, with the mere wreck of an army; Italy had been lost to Louis XIV.

The war in Spain, though not marked by any great catastrophe, had, on the whole, been inauspicious to France, though a gleam of fair promise shone towards the end of the campaign. Berwick had ably defended the frontier on the side of Portugal; but he had been compelled to retreat before superior forces, the Allies having been greatly strengthened. An army, commanded by a Huguenot chief, Ruvigny, and by a Portuguese of the name of Las Minas, marched from Salamanca and entered Madrid in triumph. Philip V. and his ministers fled from the capital; his Government had for the time fallen; a Government of Charles III. was placed in its stead. Meanwhile, an attempt had been made to retake Barcelona, captured by the Allies the year before; a French army and fleet appeared before the fortress; the Pretender, Charles III., was still within the walls. But, as at Turin, our engineers were not efficient; the attack was made at the wrong point; the siege was ill-conducted and unduly prolonged. The garri-

son, too, made a heroic defence; as has often been seen in Spanish sieges, the population rose and fought with desperate valour; the deeds of Derry and Limerick were repeated; more than one assault was successfully repulsed. The appearance of a great English fleet, with large reinforcements, brought the attack to an end; the siege was raised, and all our material was lost. This success caused the whole of the east of Spain to rise; the Catalans everywhere flew to arms; Aragon and Valencia, stirring already, broke out into revolt; the insurrection spread into Murcia and along its seaboard. Nearly a third of the Peninsula seemed utterly lost; but at this conjuncture a turn of fortune took place, not unexampled in the chequered annals of Spain. I heard the tale of these remarkable events from a kinsman of our family, of which a branch had been settled in Spain, when, as I shall relate, I visited him many years afterwards. The regular army of Philip V. had been broken up; the Government of the young king had disappeared; but the people of two-thirds of the monarchy remained; it was animated by a fierce hatred of the foreigner and his rule, and especially of the heretic English and Dutch. Madrid could not be held down by a garrison of Charles III.; from the Asturias to Granada the land was stirred by a great movement to do battle for Philip V.: bands of peasants in thousands took up arms; old soldiers and priests were made their leaders; in every province assemblies prepared for a holy war. The forces of the Pretender were hemmed in by the universal rising, isolated bodies of troops were cut off and massacred; the new administration of the kingdom was made completely powerless. Berwick ere long was enabled to take the offensive; the enemy, sorely harassed and half ruined, was forced to retreat to the Valencian coast.

## CHAPTER VIII

AFTER Ramillies and Turin it appeared impossible that France could withstand the armed strength of Europe. Her military power had received another tremendous blow; Marlborough was on her northern borders with his victorious army; Eugene and the Duke of Savoy were threatening her Alpine frontiers. Might she not be next year invaded from England, as she had been at Creçy and Agincourt—rumours to this effect were, indeed, current—might not the House of Austria reverse the policy of Henry IV. and assail her from Lorraine to Dauphiné and Provençe? Spain, too, her only ally, had lost her regular army; and though the Spanish people had risen against the Pretender, Charles III., this irregular movement could hardly prevail, especially as the Mediterranean was held by the Dutch and English fleets, and the flag of the Bourbons had almost disappeared from its waters. And how could the gigantic efforts France had made after Blenheim to recreate her armies, and to continue the war, be repeated after her late disasters, when the State seemed at the end of resources already well-nigh exhausted? Whatever envious detractors have said, the great king was not a mere creature of selfish pride. As he wrote to Villars, he was "above all a good Frenchman"; he felt that France, like a stricken war-horse, was failing in his hands, and that she should not be sacrificed for his grandson's interests. He made overtures to the Allies, nay, almost sued for

peace. The events that followed have long been known to the world; Villars has given me many interesting details; with subsequent negotiations of the same kind they illustrate what has been called the irony of Fate, but what I prefer to call the justice of God. Louis made his proposals to Heinsius, the chief of the Dutch United States; they were nearly the same as the conditions of the Second Partition Treaty arranged between the king and William III.; Charles III. was to possess Spain and the Indies; the Dutch to have a part of the Spanish Netherlands; Philip V., as Duke of Anjou, was to rule in Spanish Italy. Heinsius, it is said, rather approved of these terms; the Dutch, in fact, were feeling the heavy strain of the war, there was a party at The Hague in favour of peace. But Marlborough, now supreme in the Councils of the League, insisted on prolonging the contest; ignorant of what the future was soon to bring forth, he stood at the topmost heights of fame. The victor of Blenheim and Ramillies was the foremost man in England; another campaign, he declared, would make France succumb; even now he had enemies who asserted that he was eager the war should continue, because he was making by it immense sums of money. Eugene, too, was of the same mind; the prince looked on the great king as a personal enemy on account of wrongs done to himself and his mother; and his master, the Emperor, would not hear of peace except on his own terms. He wished to revive the monarchy of Charles V., which, more than a century before, had overshadowed Europe; the House of Austria was to reign at Vienna, Madrid and Brussels; his brother was to possess the whole dominions of Spain; France especially was to have no footing in the lands of Italy. The refusal of the Coalition to listen to the terms he had proposed

compelled Louis XIV. to go on with the contest. France, exhausted as she was, but nobly indignant, heroically responded to her great ruler's summons; the efforts she made after Blenheim were even surpassed. Every available soldier was withdrawn from the reserves in the depots; worn-out veterans flocked to the standards; a number of seamen were brought from the fleets; the very distress of the peasantry swelled the ranks of the army—thousands could not otherwise get their scanty daily bread. At the same time all that was possible was done to restore the material that had been lost: the arsenals and foundries supplied guns and muskets, horses were taken from the better classes, nay, out of the fields, to remount the cavalry. Immense exertions, too, were made to sustain the ruined finances. The poll tax was renewed; fresh taxes were imposed; loans were contracted, usurious as was the interest; recourse was even had to expedients such as debasing the currency, as forcing the great tax-gatherers to disgorge their unjust gains, as arbitrarily reducing the public debt, as selling all kinds of offices to the highest bidders. By these means the armies were again raised to their nominal strength; France had from 400,000 to 500,000 men in the field even during the later years of this calamitous war. These armies, however, at least for a time, were very inferior to what their predecessors had been; they were ill-supplied and in need of many requirements; the officers, especially the engineers, were far from efficient, and they were under the palsying spell of repeated defeats. Nevertheless, the French are a race so fitted by nature for war that these deficiencies were less than might have been supposed; before long even the masses of levies were able to appear with credit in the field. The plan of operations arranged at Versailles was more judicious than

the plans of earlier years; but it owed largely its partial success to the faults of the Allies. Vendôme was to assemble a great army in the Low Countries to confront Marlborough and to repel invasion; but, if possible, he was not to fight a decisive battle. A new marshal, Tessé, was to defend the frontier of the Alps from the hills of Switzerland to the Mediterranean Sea; his task seemed arduous, but proved to be less so than might have been supposed. Meanwhile, Berwick was to support the insurrection in Spain, to give the Allies all the trouble he could, to fan the flame already consuming the enemy. The only offensive movement was entrusted to Villars; the hostile forces on the Rhine were weak, and Baden had been replaced by another chief, Bareith, an untried soldier of no great parts. Villars, ever true to his grand original design, was to invade Germany, to lend a hand to Bavaria, in revolt, and, if possible, to carry the war to the Danube.

The military power of the League of Europe was now much greater than that of France; its armies, though composed of many races and tongues, were flushed with victory and in overwhelming strength, had they been skilfully combined and directed; the finances of England, the great paymaster, swelled by commerce and immense loans, were prosperous in the extreme. But the Coalition, though bent on carrying on the war, and confident that France would soon be at its feet, was, as before, divided by jealousies, discords and fears; these in a great measure paralysed its operations in the field; and these operations, besides, were not well conceived. Charles XII. of Sweden had defeated the Russian Czar, had driven Augustus of Saxony from the throne of Poland, and was now in the heart of Germany itself, aspiring to play the part of Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant Lion of the North, as he

had been named; he was menacing the Germans, and notably Catholic Austria. The Hungarian rising, too, was a perpetual threat to Vienna; the Emperor, now intent on Italian conquests, had become estranged from the Duke of Savoy, who in turn distrusted the head of the Hapsburgs; the King of Prussia had a dispute with the Dutch; the Dutch angrily resented a claim made by Joseph to the whole of the Spanish Netherlands. As before, the diplomatic genius of Marlborough was needed to compose these quarrels and alarms; as before, it was exerted to the very utmost of his power. The great Englishman won Charles XII. over by adroit flattery and by bribes to his ministers; he insisted that Louis XIV. was the real enemy of the Protestant name, he tried to reconcile the Emperor and the Duke of Savoy, he soothed the bitter feelings of the Dutch and the potentates at odds with them; as usual, he was lavish of promises and money for the needy German princes. In this way the League was still held together, but the armies it arrayed were less than they might have been; above all, France was given many months to renew her strength; it is remarkable that, unlike what was seen in the great days of Turenne, there was no winter campaign in the whole course of the war. The operations of the Allies, besides, were, as Villars maintained, not well designed, and were moreover not well conducted, no doubt owing to dissensions that were still secretly at work. Marlborough was not given a force sufficient to invade France, or even finally to subdue the Netherlands; he was left to a great extent to his own resources. Bareith was isolated with a weak army on the Rhenish frontier, though a vulnerable point on the great field of manœuvre; and little was done to support Charles III. in Spain, though the English and Dutch fleets could have given his cause

much assistance. The principal effort of the League, in fact, was to be the invasion of Dauphiné and Provençe; this was to be directed by Eugene and the Duke of Savoy. They were, with the aid of a great English fleet, to besiege and take the famous arsenal of Toulon; and the invasion was to be backed by a general Huguenot rising spreading from Languedoc over Gascony and Guyenne. But, as Villars has truly remarked, France has never been invaded on this frontier with success; and my great chief had pacified the Huguenot rebels of the south.

During these immense preparations to continue the war, I had remained with the army of Marsin in Hainault. We held the fortresses that approach the northern borders of France, and were not attacked by the triumphant enemy; the wrecks of the army that had fought at Ramillies drifted gradually in a sorry plight into our camps. Ere long Vendôme assumed the command, Marsin having gone to meet his fate at Turin; I beheld that celebrated chief for the first time. His countenance was seamed with the furrows of vice, but his bearing was stately, even attractive; and though he could not be deemed a consummate warrior, and he was too indolent to possess great organising powers, he had no ordinary capacity when he did himself justice, and his soldiery had implicit confidence in him. Large reinforcements came in to Vendôme by degrees; the roads to the frontier were crowded by the new levies, intermingled with a few trained regiments; by the early spring of 1707 the army was not far from 90,000 strong, and was ready to begin operations in the field. Just at this time I was ordered to rejoin the staff of Villars; the marshal had requested that I should serve with him. I set off from Mons, and, making as much haste as possible, reached his

headquarters at Saverne, in Alsace, in the first days of May. Villars was at the head of perhaps 40,000 men; his mission, I have said, was to cross the Rhine and to invade Germany; his movements at once gave proof of extraordinary skill. The enemy, at least 25,000 strong, was encamped in the well-known lines of Stollhofen, extending from the vicinity of Strasbourg beyond Rastadt, nearly along the course of the historic river; they were fortified by the best appliances of the engineer; they were regarded as almost impregnable by a hostile force. Villars, masking the operation with admirable care, divided his army into four columns; and while he attacked the lines from Kehl in person—he had given a great ball at Strasbourg the night before, in order to conceal his intended purpose—he turned them from Lauterburg, and from points on the Rhine at both their ends. The enemy decamped without firing a shot, abandoning enormous stores of munitions; this was the finest exploit of the kind in the whole war, far finer than anything Marlborough achieved against such defences. Villars, electrifying his soldiery by this brilliant success, moved rapidly into Wurtemberg, across the lands of Baden, following the course of the Neckar up to the capital, Stuttgart; he then turned to the left and attained Gmünd, making for the valley of the Upper Danube, and confident that he would be able to enter Bavaria. He had sent bodies of horsemen forward to menace Ulm, and characteristically to destroy a trophy said to have been raised on the field of Blenheim; he was soon negotiating with Charles XII., at this time still in the lands of Saxony, in the hope of detaching the king from the Grand Alliance. Though our army had been weakened by detachments on its march, the prospect for the marshal was of the highest promise, when he was suddenly stopped in his bold

enterprise. Eugene and the Duke of Savoy had invaded Provençe, and were about to besiege Toulon; Villars received orders from Versailles to retrace his steps, and to send a large part of his forces into the south of France. The marshal, baffled as he had been baffled the year before, made good his way to Strasbourg, and recrossed the Rhine, the enemy scarcely molesting his retreat. His campaign had been only a magnificent raid; it might have led to very great results.

The movement of Villars had revealed the weakness of the Coalition upon the Rhine, and had proved that France had by no means fallen. On another part of the vast theatre of the war great and unexpected success crowned the arms of Louis XIV.; this had marked effects on the whole course of the events that followed. I was told the tale by the kinsman referred to before; it was one of the most striking passages in the world-wide contest. An English fleet having largely reinforced the army of Charles III. in Spain, Ruvigny and Las Minas who, I have said, had been compelled to fall back to the Valencian seaboard, advanced into Murcia with about 26,000 men, in order to attack Berwick at the head of about an equal force. The hostile armies met on the plains around Almanza, the names of the generals on either side were significant of the revolutions of the times; the Huguenot Ruvigny commanded the allied army, Berwick, an Englishman, commanded the army of France. Ruvigny arrayed his men, leaving a ravine in his rear, and mingling infantry and horse together, bad dispositions in every sense of the word; Berwick had his foot in the centre and his cavalry on either wing, even then an not uncommon order of battle.

The Allies attacked and fell on our right; they were driven back by the Spanish levies, worthy on

this day of the *tercios* of old; but these were by degrees repulsed; Berwick made a formidable counter attack, his horsemen turned and broke up the enemy's left. On our centre and left the battle was still raging, when our victorious cavalry, crossing the field, assailed Ruvigny's line with decisive effect—it was the counterpart of Condé's grand stroke at Rocroy—the allied army suddenly gave way, and was soon involved in precipitate rout. One body of Huguenots died hard, but hundreds of the beaten soldiery perished in the ravine; thousands of the fugitives were surrounded and forced to lay down their arms; the disaster of Blenheim was nobly avenged. The army of Charles III. was, in a word, destroyed; Berwick pushed forward at once to the Segre; he captured Lerida, the Ilerda of Cæsar, a fortress which had defied Condé; he overran Catalonia up to the Pyrenees. The armed insurrection of Spain acquired irresistible force; the adherents of the Pretender were dispersed in every province; except where the Catalans still made a feeble resistance the monarchy of Philip V. was restored. From this time forward even the Allies felt that the cause of the Pretender was in the gravest peril in Spain.

An indecisive campaign, meantime, very different from an expected invasion of France, had been conducted in the Spanish Netherlands. I heard many of the incidents from companions-in-arms; as I shall relate, I served in the next year on this theatre of the war. The operations were marked by signal ability on the part of Vendôme, and by what on the part of Marlborough appeared to be timid caution, the opposite of his characteristic daring in the field. Vendôme broke up his headquarters in Hainault, and, husbanding his young army with great care, eluded every effort of his adversary to bring him to bay; in a series of admirably-designed manœuvres

he contrived to threaten Louvain and Brussels, and advanced a long way towards both cities. Marlborough was in command of perhaps 60,000 men, a force certainly much less than that of his enemy; but his troops were excellent soldiers, inured to victory. After making a few attempts to fight a great battle, he retreated to an encampment not far from Louvain; and remained there inactive a considerable time. The army of Vendôme, like that of Villars, was ere long weakened by detachments sent off to the war in Provençe; he slowly fell back, always maintaining an imposing attitude; and having entered Hainault again, moved ultimately beyond the Scheldt and the Lys, his antagonist all but waiting on him, and not risking a trial of strength. This conduct of Marlborough astonished our camps, we could not understand how the victor of Blenheim and Ramillies, with an army infinitely better than our own, did not, as he might have done, compel us to fight.[1] The causes of this apparent remissness have been partly disclosed, but the whole truth will probably never be made known. Marlborough was certainly, as had been the case before, hampered by the commissioners of the Dutch in his councils, they were over prudent and ignorant of war; and, as I have said, there was a Dutch peace party at The Hague. The population, too, of the Spanish Netherlands, which had declared for the Allies after Ramillies, were now eager ro return to their old allegiance; Brussels and many other great towns were thinking of a revolt. The disputes of the League, moreover, had only been partly allayed; and it was known that the young King of England, called there the Pretender, was obtaining assistance from France for a descent on Scotland, where there was much dis-

[1] *Marlborough's Despatches* in 1707, *passim*, showed that he wished to force Vendôme to fight a great battle.—EDITOR.

content after what is named the Union. All this checked the great Englishman in his career in the field; but the principal cause of his seeming slackness in 1707 was probably due to his own position in the State at this time. He had been covered with fresh honours after his late great triumph, and stood at the highest pinnacle of renown; but, owing to circumstances I shall briefly mention afterwards, his power and his popularity were beginning to decline. He now felt that he was no longer supreme in England; to a certain extent his arms were in this way paralysed.

The invasion of France on her south-eastern frontier had during these events altogether failed. I have often heard Villars tell the tale; he had it from the lips of Eugene himself while they were negotiating at the end of the war. The army that was to take the offensive ought to have been at least 70,000 strong, but the Emperor sent a large detachment to attack Naples; Eugene had never 40,000 men in his hands. The Duke of Savoy, too, proved to be a bad ally; he was shifty and treacherous, as was his wont; indeed, it has been said that at this very time he was secretly dealing with Louis XIV. After hesitations and delays that ought not to have occurred the Allies crossed the Var in the first days of July, but their march, whatever the reason, was extremely slow; they were not before Toulon, the main object of the invaders, until the close of the month. Here they effected their junction with a great English fleet; but meanwhile Tessé, who had hastened to the spot, had been given time to prepare the defence of the place, and he had turned the respite to the best advantage. Toulon was by no means a strong fortress; its fortifications were in decay, for it was never supposed that it would be besieged, but the old walls and their outworks had been left standing, and it

contained a powerful squadron of warships. Tessé made an entrenched camp outside the ramparts, some thousands of levies occupied this; a large part of the fleet was sunk, the crews being employed to assist the defence; some of the ships were left afloat and formed strong batteries. Before long regular troops came in from Dauphiné and Provençe, but the detachments from the armies of Villars and Vendôme were never within many marches of the beleaguered place—in fact, they were not needed to repel the enemy; the orders sent from Versailles were given in a kind of panic. Eugene had no sufficient force to invest Toulon, but he yielded to the bad advice of his inferior colleague; he occupied the heights on the eastern front of the town, but was compelled to leave the western heights open; he acknowledged to Villars that he had scarcely any hope of success. He bombarded the place, however, from the positions he held; the bombardment was seconded by the English fleet, which poured in a heavy fire from the adjoining roadsteads. But Tessé, now in considerable force, was able to assume the offensive from the heights to the west; the floating batteries of his ships proved very effective; the eastern heights were evacuated in the last days of August; the enemy, discomfited, had raised the siege. Eugene made a masterly retreat, but he was harassed by Tessé and his victorious troops, and an armed insurrection of peasants gathered on his path. As for the Huguenot rising, it made no sign; the failure at Toulon put an end to all hopes of the kind. Eugene afterwards captured Susa, on the Alpine borders of France; but the invasion of France had been frustrated; even the ships sunk at Toulon were, I have heard, successfully raised.

The war, contrary to expectation, had thus turned against the Coalition in 1707; France, like a wounded

hart, had savagely gored the hunters. Villars had sent terror into the depths of Germany, Berwick had almost liberated Spain on the great day of Almanza, Marlborough had done little or nothing in the Low Countries; above all, the invasion of Dauphiné and Provençe had failed. The Allies, nevertheless, still resolved to go on with the struggle. France, they were convinced, could not hold out many months, her resources were, manifestly, well-nigh exhausted. Their jealousies and disputes had by no means ceased, but after the sudden reverses that had befallen their arms they were apparently better united than before; they gathered themselves together against the common enemy. Marlborough had as usual gone to England in the winter; he was beset by angry and increasing factions, and his influence in the State was still declining, but he had been employed in making preparations against the descent on Scotland; he had carried these out with accustomed skill; and though he stood as high as ever in the councils of the foreign Powers, his principal service on this occasion was to make promises of assistance to the German princes. The plan of operations formed by the Allies—no doubt mainly by Eugene and Marlborough—was almost the opposite of that of the preceding year, and in all respects was more ably conceived. The lines of Stollhofen were to be restored and extended—they had been almost destroyed by Villars—the Rhenish frontier was to be occupied by an army under the command of the Elector of Hanover, strong enough to keep the French out of Germany. The arms of Charles III. were, if possible, to be sustained in Spain, her islands in the Mediterranean were to be attacked; this was a sign that the Pretender's cause on the mainland was not deemed hopeful. The Duke of Savoy was to threaten France along the Alps; it was believed that

he would be superior in force; but he was left to himself, he had begun to inspire distrust. The great effort of the League was to be made in the Low Countries, where, in 1707, it had had no success; this, it was hoped, would have perhaps decisive results. Marlborough's army was to be largely reinforced and to open the campaign against Vendôme, and the English general was to have powerful support from the Rhine. Eugene, who had repaired to that frontier to make the arrangements required for its defence, was to march as soon as he could to join his English colleague; with their united forces they were to overpower the enemy and, if possible, to carry the war into France. This was the counterpart of the fine movement by which Eugene had come into line with Marlborough before Blenheim.

The great king had received no overtures from the Allies—they knew he would have rejected their terms with disdain; he had girded up his loins to continue the war. The prospects for France in 1708 were much better than they had been after Ramillies and Turin. The state of the finances, indeed, was worse than ever; the Treasury was well-nigh empty. Chamillart had resigned this charge to a nephew of the renowned Colbert; Desmaretz, as he was named, had refused to pay the public debt. This was national bankruptcy in no doubtful sense, but somehow or other funds were made forthcoming, through arbitrary expedients of many kinds. It may be asserted, indeed, that no great and patriotic people was ever forced to succumb through mere financial distress; here the enemies reckoned without their host. On the other hand, the armies of Louis XIV. were at least as numerous as they had been the year before, and were far more efficient and in higher heart. The new levies had become real soldiers; every arm in the service had been improved, at least to a certain

extent; the impressionable French nature had been stirred and made sanguine by victories in the field. The operations of the king, for the campaign of 1708, followed in most respects the plan of his enemies; but two capital mistakes were made. James III. was to descend on Scotland, supported by a fine French squadron; it was hoped the Highlands at least would rise. Berwick was to repair to the frontier of the Rhine; he was to watch and follow the movements of Eugene, but to leave an army sufficient, if not to invade Germany, to keep the Elector of Hanover in check. The Duke of Orleans, a bad choice, was to encourage the insurrection in Spain, and, if possible, to place Philip V. securely on his throne; this task would apparently not be difficult. An unworthy slight was cast on my great chief, Villars: he was to be sent to the Alps to confront the Duke of Savoy, a mission quite inadequate to his powers; but he had been the butt of scandalous calumnies at Versailles.[1] The king had not silenced his enemies, nay, had listened to them. As the Low Countries were plainly the main object of the League, Vendôme was to be reinforced, like Marlborough, and to keep invasion away from France; Berwick was to march to his aid should Eugene try to join Marlborough; and great things were expected from a rising in the Spanish Netherlands, now largely hostile to the English and the Dutch. But here a most unfortunate resolve was made; success was expected on this theatre of the war; the Duke of Burgundy was placed in the nominal command of the army of Vendôme, as he had been placed over the head of Boufflers in nominal command six years before; this was to prove in the highest degree disastrous to France.

[1] As usual, Saint Simon was the worst of these detractors. *See* his *Mémoires*, IV., chap. III. This celebrated writer has completely misrepresented the character and the achievements of Villars.—EDITOR.

Villars was indignant that he had been despatched to the Alps, quite a secondary part of the theatre of the war; I was removed from his staff and given again the temporary command of the regiment of cavalry which I had led at Ramillies. The memorable campaign of 1708 had opened; that of 1707 had brought great and unexpected success to France: this was to bring great and unexpected reverses. I can only glance at the lesser operations on the stage of events, for all that were important took place in the Low Countries. The expedition against Scotland utterly failed—it was delayed by an illness of James III.; but the preparations made by Marlborough had not been in vain. The French squadron appeared at the Firth of Forth, an arm of the sea that leads to the chief town of the kingdom, but it found itself in the presence of a large English fleet; even an attempt was not made to effect a landing. The war in Spain had no decisive results: an English squadron made a descent on Sardinia and captured Port Mahon, the great port of Minorca; it was evident that England, mistress of Gibraltar for some years, was aiming at establishing her supremacy in the Mediterranean at the expense of Spain. On the mainland the Duke of Orleans besieged and took Tortosa, but accomplished little that requires notice. In spite, however, of the destitute state of the monarchy, the power of Philip V. continued to increase; he was again reinstated as king at Madrid; the influence of France thenceforward became great, largely through the ascendency acquired by a French lady of the Court, who went by the name of the "Spanish Maintenon." In the Alps Villars showed his wonted ability, but he met a single reverse owing to a subordinate's fault. He had scarcely more than 30,000 men; the Duke of Saxony, with perhaps 50,000, invaded Dauphiné and

approached Charnbéry, but he was beaten off with considerable loss. The duke, threading the mountain passes, then attacked Briançon, but here again he suffered a defeat; Villars, crossing the main Alps, carried the war into Piedmont, and had placed his adversary in the gravest straits, when the treachery or the cowardice of the commandant of Exilles, who surrendered the fortress after a mere show of defence, enabled the duke to effect his escape, and even to capture the place of Fénestrelles. This was a bad instance of what was seen more than once in the later years of the war; the commandant was punished as he deserved, but his example was followed by other weak men. Villars, who had witnessed how Turks can defend a breach, has always insisted that the garrison of a strong place ought to stand at least a single assault.[1] On the frontier of the Rhine little or nothing was done; Eugene and Berwick had soon left this part of the theatre and had betaken themselves to the principal part, the scene of the operations in the Spanish Netherlands.

These operations, regarded as a whole, are a melancholy instance of what jealousies and disunion effected in the armies of the great king, but, I must add, of the capacity and resource of Marlborough and Eugene. I took the command of my regiment at Mons; Vendôme, moving from the Lys, had made the place his headquarters. I found my troopers in good condition and in excellent heart. Our army was perhaps 90,000 strong; it was no longer an army of recruits. The army of Marlborough, certainly inferior in force, had gone into winter

[1] Villars thus indignantly refers to these instances of misconduct. *Mémoires*, the Vogué edition, III., p. 21 :—"Une conduite si misérable des gouverneurs et des commandants mettait le Maréchal de Villars au désespoir. Il manda au roi qu'il falloit absolument en faire pendre quelques-uns, et qu'il étoit honteux pour la nation de voir des places se rendre presque sans être attaquées."—EDITOR.

quarters, and lay in front of Brussels. Vendôme, repeating the movement of the year before, advanced to the Dyle and threatened Louvain; in May he was joined by the Duke of Burgundy; a long pause in the operations took place. The reason of this has never transpired, but it was probably due to the unhappy disputes which soon broke out between the duke and his colleague; a real opportunity may have been lost. Marlborough during these weeks remained inactive, merely observing the enemy from before Brussels; he was, no doubt, awaiting reinforcements and the support of Eugene, and would not run the risk of a premature attack. It was the beginning of July when our chiefs had their plan arranged; this was based on the assurance that a great part of the Low Countries was eager to revolt, and to welcome us as deliverers from a detested yoke. On the 4th our army broke up from Genappe and Braine l'Alleud, places near the Dyle and Forest of Soignies; it marched rapidly to Ninove, on the Dender; detachments were pushed forward as far as Ghent and Bruges, where the party favourable to our cause was known to be supreme. The two cities opened at once their gates, the burghers breaking out in joyous acclaim; there seemed to be good hope that the whole country from the Dender to the sea would largely declare for Louis XIV. Vendôme and the duke now advanced towards the Scheldt, in order to lay siege to Oudenarde, a fortress in itself of no great importance, but commanding all the adjoining region; the march was slow, for a siege train was to come from Tournay, and the presence of an enemy was not expected. By the 6th of July they had not reached Lessines, on the Upper Dender, having left a detachment behind at Ninove, and sent forward bodies of troops towards Oudenarde, but they found themselves forestalled by the great master of

war, whose daring and energy had so often been made but too manifest. By this time Marlborough had been reinforced and was in pursuit of his enemy; he had been joined by Eugene, but with some cavalry only. He drove away our detachment from Ninove, and, marching with extraordinary speed, anticipated his adversaries at Lessines, and held the Dender in force.[1] The duke and Vendôme, wasting, it is to be feared, precious time in angry discussions, made for Gavern, a point on the Scheldt and near Oudenarde; they still perhaps hoped to be able to make the siege. But Marlborough had crossed the Dender at Lessines; on the 10th he had bridged the Scheldt and drawn near the fortress.

These movements led to the great battle of Oudenarde, fought on the 11th of July 1708, another day of woeful disaster for France. Our soldiery could descry from their camps round Gavern the dark masses of the enemy crossing the Scheldt, and being formed on the uplands beyond Oudenarde; this operation was one of extreme boldness, for, if Marlborough had the support of the fortress, the river was in his immediate rear, and we were not half a march distant. Our army, to a man, was eager to fall on. Vendôme, we have since learned, was for an attack in force, but he was thwarted by his colleague, not without parts, but infirm of purpose; a comparatively small detachment only was pushed forward to observe the enemy. Hours passed; Marlborough was allowed full time to array his whole army beyond the Scheldt, and to make preparations for

[1] Marlborough has thus described these admirable operations himself. *Despatches*, IV., p. 103:—"Après la prise de Gand les ennemis avaient formé le dessein de fair le siége d'Oudenarde, et même lundi passé ils avaient fait investir la place, et leur armée était déjà avancé le lendemain à deux lienes de Lessines pour se saisir de ce camp et nous empêcher le passage de la Dendre, quand nous les avons prévenus par la diligence de notre marche. Alors ils ont rappelé leur monde de devant cette ville et ont tour né vers Gavre."—EDITOR.

a great trial of strength; our luckless detachment was surrounded and almost cut to pieces. There was still perhaps an opportunity to strike the hostile army in its positions around Oudenarde; Vendôme, it is said, was urgent for this; but here again the Duke of Burgundy interposed; our army was formed on rising ground along the Norken, a stream parallel to, but at a distance from, the Scheldt. It held a position of considerable strength from the village of Wanneghen to that of Aspen, but its attitude was purely on the defensive, always to be avoided in the case of French soldiers. Marlborough began the attack at about four in the afternoon. The renowned English chief, with characteristic suavity, gave Eugene the place of honour in command on the right, though Eugene had not 1000 men in the field; Marlborough on the left and the centre directed the onset in person. Each army, it is believed, was about 80,000 strong; owing to the celerity of the late marches, there were but few batteries of guns in the fight; from the first moment we were placed at an immense disadvantage. Vendôme was for a counter stroke along the whole line, for we had the rising ground in our favour, but the duke flatly withheld his consent, he even threw our left wing most improperly back. His colleague, however, charged with our whole right wing; our cavalry and infantry did great things; Marlborough's left was very nearly driven into the Scheldt. The enemy, however, was successfully rallied; Marlborough marshalled his men for a decisive attack; with the admirable judgment, in which he was unsurpassed, he seized the advantage of the screen of a neighbouring hill, and turned our right, hitherto almost victorious. Our soldiery, blown and disconcerted, fell back. Meantime, Eugene had pressed the attack in the other parts of the field; the enemy's line had

soon reached our positions. Our left, however, had not been really engaged; Vendôme entreated the duke to charge with it home, but the duke, whatever the reason, refused; his staff hastily advised him to abandon the field. Vendôme, it is but too well known, insulted him in the face of his officers. The shadows of evening were falling by this time, the whole army was ere long in full retreat.

My regiment had no part in this calamitous battle; it was on our extreme left, as I have said, paralysed. I had just light enough to see the furious gestures of Vendôme, apostrophising his princely colleague as a coward. Oudenarde was not as decisive as Blenheim or Ramillies, but had Marlborough and Eugene had a few hours of day, our whole army, I fear, would have been well-nigh destroyed.[1] The loss of the battle was mainly due to the shameful dissensions of our commanders; but Marlborough was fully equal to himself; his movement against our right was marked by his wonted insight and judgment. The greatest part of our army almost fled to Ghent, but detachments took refuge in Ypres and Lille. The troops were demoralised and unfit to take the field for a time. In a few days Eugene's army, hastening from the Rhine, had reached the Low Countries and joined Marlborough. The two chiefs were at the head of more than 100,000 men exulting in victory, and with no enemy in their front. They did not sleep on the laurels they had won; bodies of men were despatched to raze the lines which had been made to

[1] My kinsman's apprehensions were well founded. *Marlborough Despatches*, IV., p. 3 :—"Si nous avions eu deux heures de jour de plus, il y a apparence que les ennemis auraient été entièrement défaits; nous avons cependant environ sept mille prisonniers ontre plus de sept cents officiers." *See* too *Marlborough to the Duchess* (*Coxe*, II., p. 267):—"If we had been so happy as to have had two hours more of daylight, I believe we should have made an end of the war."—EDITOR.

cover the borders of France between Ypres and Comines; other bodies were marched across the frontier, and even reached Lille. Marlborough had his headquarters at Helchin, not far from Oudenarde. In this position of affairs the English commander, it has now transpired, proposed to invade France, marching into Artois and advancing to the Somme; the movement was to be supported by a great English fleet disembarking a contingent of English troops. It is said that as far back as 1702 Marlborough had in view an operation of the kind. This, Villars has told me, was the best instance of Marlborough's powers of forming the great combinations of war; the attack at this crisis might have had immense results. Eugene, however, daring as he was to excess, would not adopt a project he deemed too hazardous. He did not understand a twofold effort made by land and sea; but there was no division of opinion between the two illustrious chiefs. They agreed to lay siege to the great fortress of Lille, the main bulwark of France on her northern borders. The enterprise, however, was difficult in the extreme. Lille was a stronghold of the first order, a masterpiece of the art of Vauban, its citadel was vast and heavily armed; it was protected by its ramparts, a double fosse, and many external works. Its investment would be a very arduous task, for it rose from swampy flats watered by the Marque and the Deule. The approach of a besieging army was, besides, impeded by the neighbouring fortresses of Ypres and Tournay, and Marlborough and Eugene would have to draw their siege train, their munitions, and even largely their supplies, from Brussels, a base more than sixty miles distant. There was a garrison too of 15,000 men in the place, commanded by the experienced and gallant Boufflers; and while Vendôme lay around Ghent, Berwick, who had

followed Eugene from the Rhine, was by this time at Mons, with perhaps 30,000 men. There was every prospect, therefore, that two armies would be in the field to relieve Lille.

In spite, nevertheless, of these great obstacles, Lille fell, after a memorable siege. The result was mainly caused by the wretched dissensions which had set our generals against each other even before Oudenarde. The first care of the enemy was to draw lines around the place. These extended along a vast circle of about nine miles, enclosing the marshes formed by the Marque and the Deule. The next was to bring the siege train from Brussels; the immense convoy spread over fifteen miles. It never ought to have reached the fortress. It had to pass in the interval between two hostile armies. But Vendôme and Berwick did not cordially act together, though they made half-hearted attempts to intercept the convoy. Marlborough pushed forward detachments to give it assistance; it was borne successfully into the besiegers' lines, an exploit, it has been said, "posterity would never believe." Eugene undertook the active work of the siege, with from 30,000 to 35,000 men. Trenches were completed by the third week of August. The fire of some 200 great guns and mortars opened against the two main eastern bastions, from the Porte St André to the Porte St Madeleine, and against the connecting outworks and curtains. Marlborough had the command of the covering army, from 65,000 to 70,000 strong. The garrison was surrounded on all sides, but from the first it made a heroic defence. Even the townsmen took no heed of the weighty bombardment. Meanwhile, peremptory orders had been sent from Versailles to make a great effort to relieve Lille. Vendôme and Berwick had approached each other from their headquarters, but they did not join hands on the

Scheldt until the 2nd of September. They were not before the place until some days afterwards, movements indicating want of zeal in the common cause. They took a position south of the lines of investment; their united armies must have been 100,000 men. Marlborough confronted them with a force much inferior in numbers. A pause of about ten days followed. Vendôme and Berwick did not attempt to attack, and remained inactive within their camps. Their able adversary seized his opportunity and entrenched himself in formidable strength. Our army had evacuated its positions by the 15th of September. It had not fired a shot to assist its beleaguered comrades; its columns had soon disappeared beyond the Scheldt. The causes of this most discreditable retreat have since become unhappily well known. Villars used to lose all patience when he commented on them. Vendôme, it would seem, was eager to fall on, when our army came within striking distance, but he was overruled by the Duke of Burgundy; Berwick, unfriendly to Vendôme, unfortunately concurred. Amidst these discords recourse was had to Versailles. A message came from the king to attack, whatever the risk; but Marlborough had made the position he held impregnable. It was difficult to manœuvre in swampy and unwholesome ground; the shameful retrograde movement was made.

My regiment was engaged in these marches and counter marches, all worse than useless. The discipline of my men was more or less weakened; they bitterly complained of all their leaders, especially of the Duke of Burgundy; they called him a creature made for the cloister, not for the camp, a gibe unfortunately but too true. Vendôme and Berwick now occupied the region between Ghent and Tournay, and sent off detachments to

cut off supplies from Brussels; but their operations were not well conceived. As Villars often said, they ought to have seized Oudenarde; and had they established themselves there in force they would have compelled the besiegers to draw off from Lille.[1] The garrison of the great fortress had meanwhile continued to make a noble defence. Boufflers conducted more than one desperate sally. Eugene was struck down and disabled for a time. Though several outworks had been captured, no impression had been made on the body of the place. After more than thirty days of open trenches the counterscarp had not been reached or mastered. The enemy's engineers, I have heard, were far from efficient.[2] Marlborough had now to take all the operations on himself. He had been reduced, it is known, to difficult straits; his munitions were short, his supplies came but scantily in. But he had made provisions for his needs with the wisest forethought. A great convoy from England was landed at Ostend, containing every requirement for going on with the siege; this was attacked by Vendôme with superior forces, but they were beaten, and the convoy reached the investing lines. Vendôme now flooded the country between Ostend and Nieuport, to prevent further supplies coming in. But communication with England was never lost. Marlborough was able to continue the attack. The

[1] Compare Villars's *Mémoires*, III., pp. 22, 23, the Vogué edition :—Il répondit que, dès que M. de Vendôme n'avoit pas pris le parti de secourir Lille, rien n'étoit plus utile que de faire le siège de Oudenarde, place médiocre, et qui ne tien droit que peu de jours, mais si importante par sa situation qu'en la prenant on rendoit non seulement la conquête de Lille inutile aux ennemis, mais encore que la retraite de leur armée en devenoit très difficile."—EDITOR.

[2] My kinsman's intelligence is correct. Marlborough wrote to Godolphin, 20th September 1708 (*Coxe*, II., p. 312) :—"It is impossible for me to express the uneasiness I suffer for the ill conduct of the engineers at the siege, where I think everything goes wrong."—EDITOR.

town of Lille surrendered in the last week of October, but Boufflers manfully clung to the citadel. A second siege had to be begun. The defence, as before, was maintained with the most stubborn energy. But Vendôme and Berwick even now did not act well together, at least would not make a determined effort to relieve Lille. The Elector of Bavaria, indeed, who, after Blenheim, had been a kind of knight-errant among our armies, attacked Brussels, in the hopes of forcing the siege to be raised, as Villeroy had made a similar attack many years before. But Marlborough and Eugene, now recovered from his wound, were, like William at Namur, not to be turned aside from their quarry; they, in truth, soon made the Elector retreat. The citadel of Lille fell in the second week of December. Boufflers, covered with honours by his conquerors, marched out with the remains of the garrison; but the fortress would never have passed into the enemy's hands had our armies been led by men who agreed with each other. Marlborough and Eugene, with characteristic energy, had soon attacked and captured Ghent and Bruges, setting the crown on a magnificent campaign. The Low Countries were now lost to France; invasion was hanging on her northern frontier; her generals and armies had been defeated and disgraced; the heir to the crown had been brought into contempt. He was never seen in the camp again.

## CHAPTER IX

THE position of affairs after the disaster of 1708 seemed almost as hopeless for Louis XIV. as it had been after the disasters of two years before. No doubt Oudenarde had not been such a defeat as Blenheim or Ramillies. The cause of Philip V. was making progress in Spain. Villars had successfully defended the Alpine borders of France. The war on the Rhine had languished with no results. Our armies, too, though they had suffered much, were not mere wrecks, as they had been in 1706; the army in the Low Countries especially was still a powerful force. But the invasion of France from the north appeared imminent, after the fall of the great stronghold of Lille. Alarm prevailed at Versailles and in Paris that Marlborough and Eugene might march to the capital, as Condé and Charles of Lorraine had marched sixty years before, in the all-but-forgotten war of the Spanish Fronde. All our chiefs, too, with the single exception of Villars, had sunk in general opinion in the late campaign. Vendôme, even Berwick, were harshly condemned; the Duke of Burgundy had hid his diminished head. The distress of the State was becoming daily worse. And yet the ruin caused by the havoc of war was less than that caused at this time by the pitiless hand of Nature. The winter of 1708 was one of the most terrible ever known in Europe. It fell with appalling results on France, exhausted as the nation already was, and in the

direst straits. After the fall of Ghent and Bruges, our army had gone into winter quarters. I was placed again on the staff of Villars, and was sent to make a round of inspection in several provinces, in order to ascertain how the marshal could remount his cavalry. The winters have always been mild in Ireland. The sights I saw and the tales I heard, during this winter in France, would make the bravest of spirits tremble. In some districts the peasantry were simply starved; their villages and cottages were filled with corpses, devoured and mangled by wolves as they lay unburied. The deaths in Paris were twofold the usual rate. The cold was so intense that the olive and the vine perished in lands which had been called the garden of the realm. The work of husbandry was everywhere suspended for months. Even the sea was congealed along parts of the coast, keeping ships in their harbours and destroying trade. The swiftly-flowing Rhone itself was made ice after its confluence with the Saone. Universal dearth fell on the stricken land; and, while famine did its work on thousands of the poor, traders, farmers, and even many of the lesser *noblesse*, could hardly find their daily food, suddenly raised to an almost fabulous price. I beheld gentlemen humbly begging an alms, and crowds gathering round the hospitals of the State, in the hope of being admitted, to escape a cruel death. Only one spectacle of the kind has ever met my eyes. I witnessed, as I shall relate afterwards, the great Irish famine of 1739-41.

In this terrible situation the great king, now far advanced in the decline of old age, made overtures for the second time to the League of his enemies. He was, no doubt, guided by patriotic motives, for he was kindly-hearted and, besides, a statesman. But he was no longer the idol of a victorious nation; from

this time forward he was rather feared than loved; his emotional subjects had begun to turn away from him. The events that followed have long been matter of history; but I have heard much from Villars and other public men of France. Louis offered to recognise the Pretender, Charles, as King of Spain and the Indies, and to give up his own claim to Spanish Italy, with the exception of the kingdom of Naples; this was to be a compensation for Philip V. as Duke of Anjou. This was a much larger concession than had been proposed before, but it was contemptuously rejected by the Allies. The Dutch notably treated the envoy of France with scorn; they had not forgiven the invasion of nearly forty years before, when a French host had overrun the States, and Holland had been turned into a waste of the ocean. The king felt that great sacrifices must be made; he assembled a council of his chief ministers. Times had changed since, in an evil hour for France, he had accepted the whole Monarchy of Spain for a young scion of his race. Louis resolved to make offers to the Allies in their separate interests. The Duke of Anjou was to be thrown over; Charles was to possess the undivided dominions of Spain; the Island of Newfoundland was to go to England, and the fortifications of Dunkirk—a thorn in her side—to be razed; a whole chain of fortresses was to be ceded to the Dutch in order to make what was called a "barrier" against France; Lille and Strasbourg, great French strongholds, were to be yielded to her foes; France, in a word, was to be nearly reduced to the position she held before the Peace of Westphalia. These proposals were accompanied by an incident significant in the extreme; the king tried to buy Marlborough over by an enormous bribe. The great Englishman, to do him justice, rejected this; but the circumstance

shows what was thought of him at Versailles, and even elsewhere. Such an insult would never have been offered to Villars or Eugene. Yet even these conditions would not satisfy the League; its leaders insisted that, in addition to the terms proposed by the king, Alsace should practically be restored to the empire, and that Savoy and Nice, late conquests of France, should be given back to the duke. The bitterest drop in the cup of humiliation was, however, this: the Allies required that Louis should turn his arms against his own grandson, should Philip V. not take himself and his Court out of Spain within a short space of time. Marlborough, it is believed, was opposed to this last cruel affront; his conduct has been ascribed to corrupt motives. I am disposed to think that, with characteristic wisdom and tact, he was unwilling to put on the great king indignities that could not be endured, and that would make the prospects of peace hopeless.

Louis proudly rejected these shameful conditions. History has placed on record his dignified words: "I had rather fight my enemies than fight my grandson." He made, not in vain, an appeal to his people; the governors of the provinces were directed to let all France know what was to be imposed on her, and to adjure her to make another effort. Appalling as the state of the nation was, it heroically made answer to its great ruler's summons; from Brittany to Provençe there was an universal cry to go on with the war. There was no difficulty in finding recruits for the armies; the distress of the peasantry was such that their sons "flocked to the bread waggons" on the lines of march in order to obtain the means of existence. France had never yet so many armed men on foot, and tens of thousands of these were excellent soldiers. But the terrible question was how to continue the struggle and to

maintain the forces of France in the field in view of the calamities of the State and the ruin which had befallen the nation. Yet a sufficient response was not wanting. All classes, fired by patriotic passion, felt the emergency, and did their best to meet it; the king and the *noblesse* sent again their plate to the Treasury, merchants and traders contributed what they could, even the hoards of peasants came out from many a humble dwelling. As for the finances, the old expedients were employed: the payment of the public debt was still withheld; fresh taxes were imposed; the revenue was anticipated in different ways; an enormous sale of offices was made. In fact, as a wit of the day remarked, "the State was destroyed in order to save it." Happily, however, other resources were found: a fleet of merchant ships trading with the Indies supplied a large treasure of gold and silver; the forests of the realm were largely felled and turned into money. At the same time admirable exertions were made to relieve the misery of the starving poor: corn was imported to an immense extent from the African coasts, the populace of Paris was fed at the cost of the State; a special tax was made to mitigate the universal distress in the provinces. As for the armies, nothing was left undone to make them ready to take the field: supplies of grain, horses, requirements of all kinds were obtained, either by force or through the general goodwill; another special tax was levied for this purpose, and Chamillart was at last removed from the office which he had filled to the detriment, nay, to the peril of the State. By all these means the military power of France was made far more formidable than her enemies supposed, and she was happily given time to develop her still vast resources. The plan of operations formed at Versailles was in conformity with the position of affairs, and with the evident

intentions of the Grand Alliance. The great powers of Villars were at last recognised; he was to confront Marlborough and Eugene in the north with an army as efficient and powerful as it could be made. Berwick was to defend the frontier of the Alps, where an invasion in considerable force was expected. Harcourt, a new marshal, was to defend the frontier of the Rhine. As for Spain, Besons, an almost untried chief, was to carry on the war for Philip V. It is remarkable that no command was given to Vendôme; in fact, he was in disgrace at Versailles, probably made a scapegoat for the luckless Duke of Burgundy.[1]

At this grave crisis, as had been the case after Ramillies and Turin, the Coalition could doubtless have overcome the great king had it cordially combined its gigantic forces; above all, had it acted with the promptitude the occasion required. But extravagant, nay, monstrous, as had been its demands, it did not strike at once with effect; this may have partly been owing to extreme confidence, more probably to jealousies and disputes that had never ceased, and were even aggravated at this very time. The Dutch, the King of Prussia and the Emperor still looked askance at each other, and still maintained pretensions that could not be reconciled; and insolent as Heinsius and other Dutchmen had been, when Louis XIV. had really sued for peace, the party in the State that was tired of the war was increasing in numbers. The long-standing dissension, too, between the Emperor and the Duke of Savoy, had broken out into an open quarrel; for some months, it is known, they refused to co-operate in the field. As usual, Marlborough addressed himself to appease these discords. As usual, he did a great deal, but his authority was not what it had

[1] *See* Villars's *Mémoires*, III., pp. 8, 14, 15.—EDITOR.

been; he was not as successful as in former years. I shall relate afterwards the events that caused the decline of his power in England, and that led to his tremendous fall; enough here to say that though he received the thanks of the Parliament for his services in the campaign of 1708, angry voices in the House of Commons were raised against him. He was beset by many and bitter enemies; both parties in the State were not friendly to him. He had not as an English statesman given proof of his characteristic tact. The queen was becoming completely estranged from himself and his wife. It is significant that, in the negotiations with Louis XIV., an English plenipotentiary had been made his colleague; not impossibly the English ministers had got wind of the offer of the bribe. For all these reasons the League of Europe was more divided when the campaign of 1709 opened than it had been, perhaps, since the beginning of the war. Time was wasted in endless debates and parleys. Louis XIV. was given an opportunity again to prepare his armies for the field. The plan of the Allies was what had been foreseen at Versailles: Eugene and Marlborough were to invade France from the north; a combined Austrian and Piedmontese force was to make its way into Dauphiné across the Alps; the Elector of Hanover was to march into Alsace; two armies were to support the cause of the Pretender in Spain. But Marlborough and Eugene were not ready until near the end of June; the operations on the other theatres of war were even more delayed.

Villars had reached his army in the north by the end of March; I had preceded him some weeks with other members of his staff. The marshal, as was his wont, was in high heart; he found his soldiery, perhaps 80,000 strong, assembled round the fortresses south of Lille in Artois. The reports that

flowed into his headquarters from the men in power in the province, and in the chief towns, were enough to discourage even the most sanguine mind. Orders had been given from Versailles to procure supplies of all kinds, and to send them to the cantonments of the troops; but the country had been wasted through the ravage caused by the siege of Lille, and was smitten by barrenness owing to the intense cold. Corn and forage were especially wanting; our army could not stir a step from its camps. But the marshal was a born leader of men. By skilfully making use of persuasion and force, he contrived by degrees to obtain supplies, though hardly sufficient for long marches; we had enough munitions and horses to take the field; before June, we were not, so to speak, paralysed. As for our soldiers, symptoms of licence and indiscipline were apparent for a time; but after having made a few examples, Villars addressed an earnest appeal to the honour of his men. His extraordinary influence was soon felt; they rallied around a general who had never known a defeat, and became animated by the very best spirit. It was otherwise, I regret to say, with many of our young officers; they had become demoralised by the reverses of late years. It is significant that the marshal entreated the great king to send a Prince of the Blood to his camp, in order to teach noble boys their duty—a request, fortunately, I am convinced, refused. One circumstance told in favour of Villars; the misery and distress prevailing all round sent peasants in tens of thousands to find bread in our camps. He had taken a position in the plains of Lens, a scene of victory of the grand Condé; he employed them in constructing lines, extending from Aire to Bethune and Douay, and in the direct path of an enemy advancing from Lille. These defences were strengthened by the usual

methods—stockades, inundations and fortified points, they became formidable in the highest degree; and spaces were always left for counter attacks. Villars, however, I know, was not at all sure that Marlborough and Eugene would be stopped by this obstacle; he believed them to be immensely superior in force; he thought, as was the idea at Versailles, that the enemy would turn his lines on his left, and then descend on the Somme, and perhaps march on Paris.[1]

Our army was gradually strongly reinforced. Some drafts of men were sent from the Rhine; the remains of the Elector of Bavaria's army came in; before long Louis despatched the renowned Maison du Roi, raised even after Ramillies to its usual numbers, and led by the flower of the *noblesse* of France. Two bodies of my countrymen joined us also, one the brigade of Andrew Lee, the successor of the chief of Newtown Butler, the other the brigade of Clare that had fought at Höchstädt and Blenheim; they were to give proof of their worth on the terrible day of Malplaquet. By these means Villars was now in command of perhaps 110,000 men, a real, trained and very powerful army, wholly different from the army of a few months before. I am happy to add that our young officers had become up to their work, and before long were able to show they could fight like heroes. The respite, in fact, given to France had been of priceless value; the delays made by the Allies had been an enormous mistake. As I have said, Eugene and Marlborough were not in readiness until the end of June. They arrived from Lille at the head of

[1] My kinsman is correct in this statement. See Villars's *Mémoires*, III., p. 54:—"Si les ennemis avoient marché à Saint-Venant et à Aire, ces deux places ne pouvoint être sauvées que par une bataille qu'il falloit donner sans aucun avantage de poste, et avec 50,000 hommes de moins que les ennemis. Ces deux places une fois en leur pouvoir, ils pouvoient aller prendre Abbeville, se saisir de Boulogne et mettre le royaume à contribution jusqu'à Paris."—EDITOR.

perhaps 120,000 men, for the most part veterans glorying in the triumphs of years. The two great warriors advanced towards our lines; but after reconnoitring them for a few days, they suddenly decamped, and, marching in retreat to their left, sate down before the fortress of Tournay, and, as I shall describe, undertook the siege. This movement astonished our army and our chief. "This," Villars said to me, "is recurring to the obsolete wars of sieges; Turenne never would have been so timid. Why did not the enemy outflank me and make for the Somme? Tournay ought to keep him before its ramparts for the rest of the campaign." It is, indeed, not easy to understand how Eugene and Marlborough, both remarkable for boldness in the field, recoiled from before strong but rather short lines; all but certainly they had intended to give Villars battle, and, had they defeated him, to advance to the capital, as Marlborough had long had in his mind, and as he had proposed the year before; one or two remarks may, however, be made. Marlborough had fallen back before my chief in 1705; he may have been cautious when in the presence of a great commander. I have heard, too, that as had been the case before, he was crossed on this occasion by Dutchmen in his camp; and the decline of his authority at home may have diminished his wonted confidence in himself. Eugene, moreover, may not have at heart approved of operations to be conducted in part by sea, as he had not approved of them in 1708. All this, nevertheless, is only surmise; the fact remains that Villars had won the first move in the great game of war played in this memorable campaign.[1]

[1] Marlborough and Eugene had intended to defeat Villars, and march southwards into France in 1709. But *Marlborough's Despatches*, IV., pp. 520-530, clearly show that with Eugene he did not venture to attack the lines of Villars, and for that reason laid siege to Tournay. His despatches, however, may not tell the whole truth.—EDITOR.

Tournay is one of the strongest places in Europe, considered by some engineers even stronger than Lille. The fortress was one of ancient construction, but Vauban had added powerful outworks; the citadel was protected by a series of mines, the most formidable at this time in existence. Eugene and Marlborough had invested Tournay by the first week of July. Villars did not make an effort at direct relief; he was confident besides that the place could hold out through the autumn. He advanced, however, from his fortified lines, and sent detachments as far as the Lower Lys, which harassed the besiegers and cut off their supplies; he even seized two or three of the enemy's posts; in a word, he gave proof of his wonted energy and resource. The siege, meanwhile, had not turned out as well for the arms of the great king as had been expected. The garrison, indeed, had made bold sallies, and more than once had driven the assailants back; but the townsmen did not show a patriotic spirit, and did not heartily join in the defence. The principal outworks were carried by degrees; the counterscarp was mastered by the last week of July; the governor, fearing an assault, in the mood of the citizens, surrendered the town as the month was closing. The formidable citadel, nevertheless, remained; the mines were supposed to have made it impregnable; the grand Condé had declared that it could defy an attack. The besiegers were compelled to advance very slowly, in order to discover what has been called "an infernal labyrinth of underground defence"; days were spent before the trenches were designed and opened. Ere long, as the approaches to the great work were reached, a frightful subterranean conflict took place the besiegers and the besieged fought amidst the mines; hundreds of brave men were slain or smothered by the explosions of these

fearful instruments of war. The citadel would certainly have made a protracted resistance had not the necessary supplies failed; the governor had been remiss in getting food, at least less energetic than my chief; he was forced to beat a parley in the last days of August. The defence of Tournay, however, had not been fruitless, the fortress kept the enemies before it for nearly two months, and prevented their operations in the field; it enabled Villars to construct the famous barrier, which ultimately, it may be said, proved the salvation of France. During this period of respite the marshal made admirable use of the masses of peasants who surrounded his camps; he drew lines stretching along the northern borders of Artois, from the Upper Lys to the Upper Scheldt, which covered the whole country from Aire to Valenciennes and Condé. These defences, models of the art of the engineer, were extended afterwards until they reached the Sambre; whatever may be said, they baffled and foiled the enemy.

September had come. It was now impossible to attempt the invasion of France, of which we had heard so much. Eugene and Marlborough resolved to make another siege, and to attack the great stronghold of Mons, another of the keys of what was then our frontier. The place rises from flats between the streams of the Haine and the Trouille, feeders of the Scheldt; it is surrounded by woods and hills, which make an approach difficult; it was protected by lines along the eastern front; it was in itself a fortress of the first order; but, unfortunately, the garrison was weak at this moment, a circumstance of which the enemy was perhaps aware. The allied chiefs had drawn off from Tournay by the 4th of September, at least with the greater part of their forces; a detachment, marching with extraordinary speed, had reached

Mons, and turned the lines by the 6th; in two days the main body of Marlborough's army had got over the Haine and the Trouille, and had closed round the fortress on its southern front, thus cutting off communication with France; this admirable operation was admirably carried out. The army of Eugene, however, was half a march distant, and a large body of troops was only leaving Tournay; the enemies were for the time divided. Villars did not hear of the fall of the citadel until the 6th of September. He advanced at once to follow Marlborough and Eugene; he knew that Mons had not a sufficient garrison; he had resolved to fight a great battle for the relief of the fortress. Before he broke up his camp at Douay, he had been joined by Boufflers, the hero of Namur and Lille; a detachment he had pushed forward had been forced to retreat. By the 9th Villars was approaching Mons, the whole of his army well in hand; by this time Eugene had drawn near Marlborough, but there was still an interval of space between them, and the men from Tournay were as yet distant. Marlborough, it is now known, expected to be attacked; the idea corresponded to his daring mind, but Villars has always insisted that he could not have attacked with success. He had resolved to stand on the defensive, and to run the risk of a great trial of strength. Should he defeat the Allies, the siege of Mons would be certainly raised. He chose a position which Nature had made formidable in itself; an opening between two woods, to the south of the fortress, slopes down from the hamlet of Malplaquet to the valley below; it presents a strong front of defence to an enemy, and an enemy would find it all but impossible to turn it on either flank. Villars arrayed his army upon this well-selected ground, and proceeded to fortify it with the various resources of our art.

The evening of the 9th and the day of the 10th of September were spent in making preparations for the great battle at hand. The enemy's outposts and our own were sometimes so near each other that officers were able to exchange fair words; but Villars put an end to these courtesies; he feared that an opportunity was being taken to examine our lines. The two hostile armies, without reckoning the division from Tournay, had soon joined hands; the army of Eugene formed the right wing and the right centre, the army of Marlborough the left centre and the left wing. The allied headquarters were at a spot called Blaregnies, at the opening between the woods that stretched down from Malplaquet. We could clearly descry the enemy's engineers placing great batteries to sweep this part of the ground, which would necessarily be the chief avenue for the attack, but there were reserves of guns in the rear, and batteries on either flank. The army of Eugene, I have heard, was mainly composed of his own Austrians and of Prussian and German troops; that of Marlborough of Englishmen and of a large Dutch contingent. We could see the dense masses forming their lines, the red-coated English in the centre, the space most exposed to our guns. The right wing of our army held the wood of Lanière, spreading along the opening referred to before, and meeting the right centre beyond Malplaquet; it comprised the flower of the infantry of France. The right and left centre, making the whole centre the most naturally vulnerable part of our line and really the post of honour on this day, was held by the brave exiles of our race, by the Bavarian Guards, and by three or four picked French regiments. The left wing occupied the wood of Taisnière and Sart, extending along the opening like that of Lanière, but parallel to it, and at no great distance; it was composed of strong bodies of French

infantry. The woods, on which both our wings rested, had the passages through them barred by stockades, and were in places entrenched and protected by guns; they formed most powerful obstacles, and supports for the defence. Our centre, holding the space between the woods, was the front which the enemy would be forced to make the object of his chief attack; it was entrenched in places with remarkable skill and care; the approaches to it were commanded by field works and batteries, so arranged as to throw everywhere a destructive cross fire. Behind our first line, so arrayed on the ground, our cavalry was ranged in imposing reserves; the Maison du Roi, dragoons and heavy and light horsemen formed our second line; ample space was given them to manœuvre and to charge the enemy if required. I am not surprised that writers have described our position, strongly covered as it was on both flanks and presenting a formidable and narrow front, as opposing to an assailant "a gulf of infernal fire"; but our entrenchments were not so strong as has been supposed. The object of Villars was to induce the enemy to attack.[1] I am disposed to think that the marshal, when he formed his lines, had not heard of the detachment from Tournay; he would otherwise have strengthened his left wing, which would be exposed should that body of men attack it.

The 11th of September 1709 was the day of the great and terrible fight of Malplaquet. Armies of such size had never been seen in the field before; from different accounts of the battle I have read, each army was not far from 100,000 strong. The enemy, however, had certainly a greater number of guns; I believe writers on his side have not reckoned the troops from Tournay, although they took a most

[1] *See* Villars's *Mémoires*, III., p. 70.—EDITOR.

important part in the contest.[1] The great renown of the commanders who had now met had brought generals from many lands to behold this grand passage of war; the Prince Royal of Prussia, Saxe of Fontenoy, and the Muscovite Munich were in the camp of the Allies; James III. of England was in the train of Villars, and twelve officers who afterwards became Marshals of France. A thick fog lay on the whole scene in the morning, shrouding woodland and plain in its clammy folds; but shouts of exultation burst from our lines as Boufflers, generously given the place of honour to the right, and Villars rode before our embattled front. I have never seen the French soldier in higher heart; the days of disaster had passed out of his mind; cries of "Long live the King and the Marshal!" broke out from the ranks; more than one regiment threw away its rations, eager for the fray and in the sure hope of victory. Silence and darkness hung over the opposite camps, save where faint sounds of music sometimes reached the ear. Marlborough and Eugene, I have heard, made their troops solemnly bow down in prayer, and for this I do not at all blame them; but if, as I have been told, they made light of our men, they found ere long that they were in grievous error. By about nine in the forenoon the mist had lifted. After a fierce cannonade on both sides the Dutchmen, under their leader, the young Prince of Orange, advanced against the wood of Lanière and our right. These troops, however, were easily repulsed; indeed, it is now known that the movement

[1] Coxe, who has devoted much attention to the subject, estimates both armies at about 93,000 men each, II., p. 436; Alison, p. 265, gives the Allies 93,000 and Villars 95,000. I do not think either writer includes the troops from Tournay. The Allies had about twenty more guns than the French. The editor of the *Mémoires of Villars*, the Vogué edition, III., p. 68-69, makes the Allies superior in force to the extent of 10,000 men, but this seems to be an exaggeration.—EDITOR.

was only a feint. Meanwhile Eugene, with a great Austrian and Prussian force, had attacked our left and the wood of Taisnière and Sart; two of Marlborough's lieutenants had fallen on our entrenched front with formidable masses of German and English footmen. The struggle at both points raged furiously for a time; the wood of Taisnière and Sart was at last carried; but as the enemy came in contact with our left wing he was successfully driven back by Villars, leading a great charge in person, and having drawn part of our men from his centre. Our front, too, had withstood every attack; the cross fire of our guns had had deadly effects. Marlborough had charged us in vain, with part of his reserves; my countrymen were with difficulty restrained from rushing out of their entrenchments and making a massacre of the defeated Saxons.

An immense disaster had befallen the enemy during the progress of this still doubtful conflict. The Prince of Orange, perhaps mistaking his orders, perhaps carried away by the ardour of youth, launched his soldiery again on the wood of Lanière, and tried to storm our entrenchments in front of Malplaquet; the result was sudden and well-nigh decisive. His men were driven out of the wood with terrible loss; our batteries mowed them down with a frightful converging fire as they pressed forward against our lines; our infantry, sallying from their entrenchments, broke their assailants up; a charge of our cavalry made the rout complete. A large part of the allied left wing was destroyed. Had Boufflers at this crisis made a great effort with our right, the battle, it has been said, would have been won; but, whatever the cause, the opportunity was lost. Nevertheless we had as yet the best of the fight; before long our left, already hardly pressed, was assailed by fresh and unexpected foes. As had

been arranged by Marlborough and Eugene, and, as I am certain, Villars did not foresee, the men from Tournay appeared on the field; and issuing from the extreme edge of the wood of Sart, fell on the flank of our infantry, comparatively weak at this point. The marshal, when made aware of this unwelcome news, detached a large body of troops from his centre, even now much thinned, and directed them to support his imperilled wing; our Irish exiles were part of these; I can still hear their enthusiastic cheers as they charged the advancing enemies and drove them back for the moment.[1] Eugene, however, sustained the troops from Tournay by another weighty attack in force; Villars was struck down by a musket shot as he was heroically urging on a heroic defence. I was by his side when he fell; he was just able to order me to tell the commander of our left to hold his ground to the last man, and to send officers to inform Boufflers that he was now our chief: he was soon senseless and was carried away from the field. The fall of their beloved leader rather dismayed our men on the spot; they were deprived of his presence and had no orders; our left began to waver and was slowly forced back. Villars, not quite fairly perhaps, has blamed his lieutenant; he always insisted that, but for his wound, he must have gained a victory. The retreat of our left uncovered our centre, already weakened by large detachments. Marlborough, who had quitted this part of the field for a time, in order to rally the Prince of Orange's men, seized the occasion with that insight which never failed him; calling up his reserves, he pressed a tremendous attack home. Masses of footmen, protected by the fire of their guns, and supported by cavalry watching an opportunity to strike, flung themselves against our lines

[1] This is especially noticed by Coxe, II., p. 453.—EDITOR.

in an incessant onslaught; but the resistance they encountered was not less stern: the scales of fortune hung for perhaps two hours in suspense. The entrenchments of our centre, however, were at last carried by sheer weight of numbers; the dying and the dead choked up the blood-stained works. The infantry of the defence sullenly fell back, but in good order, and saving their guns. Marlborough's cavalry now made a great effort; but our horsemen repulsed a series of furious charges. The Maison du Roi surpassed itself; James III., to do him justice, was foremost in the fight. Boufflers covered the retreat with judgment and skill, but in fact the enemy did not attempt a pursuit; our army was brought in safely under the guns of Le Quesnoy.

Malplaquet was a victory for the Allies in a certain sense, and Marlborough and Eugene deserve high praise for the skilful direction of the troops from Tournay; this movement, by which our left was suddenly turned, was the main cause perhaps of our loss of the battle. Villars had fought to relieve Mons; he was forced from a position of his own choice; the fortress, weakly garrisoned, had before long fallen. But when this has been said, Malplaquet was a Pyrrhic victory, if ever there was a victory of this kind. The losses of the enemy far exceeded our own, perhaps 20,000 against 12,000 men; the Dutch army never recovered from its defeat; the peace party in Holland became stronger. But the consequences were even more momentous; the Grand Alliance held together for some time, but from this day was distinctly weakened, and the decline of Marlborough's power and influence was soon to be succeeded by his memorable fall. I found my chief laid on a pallet in Le Quesnoy; his coverlet was made of captured flags and standards. Though his pain was intense, his first words were that the army

must be made ready to fight on the morrow. Such an arrangement, however, was not perhaps possible. Boufflers placed us in fortified lines between Le Quesnoy and Valenciennes. Both armies soon had gone into winter quarters; the enemy had not dared to molest us. The wound of Villars—he had been struck in the knee—became so threatening that the great king sent his chief surgeon to dress it and to save a life so precious to France. The marshal, when able to be moved, was conducted to Versailles and lodged in one of the noble royal apartments. I had the high privilege of waiting on him. A severe operation removed the musket ball; his fine constitution overcame the shock. He received honours and attentions when on his couch of pain perhaps never before bestowed on a subject. Louis XIV. made him a Peer of France, placing him in the foremost rank of the dukes, repeatedly consulted him touching the war, in fact treated him as a loved and fully-trusted friend. The maréchale had a room to herself to attend her husband; Madame de Maintenon, even the young Duchess of Burgundy, repeatedly visited the illustrious invalid. The great men of the realm wrote him a number of letters; indeed, as his health returned, he sometimes held what seemed to be a *levée* of the Court.[1]

The war had mainly gathered upon the northern borders of France in the eventful campaign of 1709; it was of much less importance on its other theatres. The quarrel between the Emperor and the Duke of Savoy retarded the invasion of our Alpine frontier; the duke even refused to take the field in person. Berwick was thus given time to prepare and to strengthen the defence. He was at the head of perhaps 40,000 men; he constructed a succession of

[1] My kinsman's narrative is correct. *See* "Saint Simon," a detractor of Villars, *Mémoires*, V., p. 149.—EDITOR.

fortified lines from Geneva to the coast along the Lesser Alps, and placed the chief part of his army in an entrenched camp at Briançon. These dispositions have been highly praised by good judges of the military art: the passes through the range were effectually barred, and Berwick covered Dauphiné and was able to fall on his enemy. Summer was far advanced when the Austrian Daun, the father of a soldier rising in the service of the young empress queen,[1] crossed the Great Alps and entered the lands of Savoy; but he recoiled before his adversary and effected his retreat with loss, though his army was very superior in numbers. On the frontier of the Rhine the Elector of Hanover was not in readiness until August. He crossed the river and made his way into Alsace, his object being to combine his operations with those of Daun, but one of his lieutenants was routed by Harcourt at Neubourg, near the scene of Friedlingen; the Elector was compelled to repass the Rhine. The twofold attack in front and in flank, on the north and the east of France, had therefore really failed; the grand projects of the Allies had been frustrated. In Spain little of importance took place. The nation, and notably the great *noblesse*, continued to rally around Philip V.; Besons, in Catalonia, conducted the war with success. From the Scheldt to the Rhine and the Tagus the boasted efforts of the League, which had confidently reckoned on overwhelming the great king by the sheer force of superior numbers, had practically been almost wholly vain.

[1] This was afterwards the famous Marshal Daun of the Seven Years' War.—EDITOR.

## CHAPTER X

THE position of affairs, but with respect to the war only, was much better for France at the close of 1709 than it had been at the close of 1708. Two great strongholds on her borders had no doubt fallen; the loss of Tournay and Mons would facilitate the invasion of her northern provinces; but Malplaquet had been a terrible rebuff to the Grand Alliance. Villars had drawn a formidable barrier nearly across Artois; the enemy had been defeated on the Alps and the Rhine; the prospects of Philip V. in Spain were improving. Our armies, too, were more efficient than they had lately been; and the appalling misery caused by the winter of 1708 had in some measure been lessened. But the exhaustion of the State was perhaps worse than ever; after the convulsive efforts of the last few years the nation, it was feared, could not maintain the contest. In these afflicting circumstances Louis XIV. renewed the overtures he had lately made. He addressed himself in the first instance to the Dutch, who, despite the attitude they had taken in 1708, were, after Malplaquet, inclining to peace. The first conferences were held at a place called Gertruydenberg, a fortress near the mouths of the Meuse; representatives of the Coalition soon took part in them. The king all but accepted the harsh conditions of the year before, save as to drawing his sword against his own grandson, but he went a long way even in this direction. He withdrew nearly his whole army from Spain, proposed that

Philip V. should, as Duke of Anjou, obtain the kingdom of Naples and its two great islands, and actually offered, should Philip reject these terms and not cede Spain and the Indies to Charles III., to supply funds to the Allies to continue the war. The Dutch envoys, it is known, were ready to treat on these bases; Marlborough, it is believed, agreed with their views. But Heinsius, I have heard, still held stiffly out. Marlborough's authority was on the wane, even on the Continent; an English plenipotentiary, it deserves notice, had been associated with him as a kind of spy on his conduct, so great was the distrust he now inspired in England. But the principal opposition to the great king was made by the Emperor and the Duke of Savoy, for the moment united in a common selfish purpose. The Emperor insisted that the Spanish Monarchy should not be dismembered; the duke had turned a covetous eye towards Sicily, which he had learned was to be a reward for his treachery to France; the Pretender, Charles, besides, had made a claim to Roussillon, once an outlying province of Spain, but for many years a loyal part of the great French kingdom. Vague "ulterior demands" were also talked of; the conferences were ere long broken up; the prospects of peace for Europe vanished.

The Allies had been taught a lesson by their delays in 1708; they boasted that they were more united than ever—this was noised abroad, if by no means true; they assumed from the conduct of the king that France was tottering to her fall. They made again immense preparations for the coming campaign, and gave out that it was to be short and decisive. Eugene and Marlborough were to invade Artois with imposing forces; this movement was to be combined with a descent on the coast, to be sustained by an English fleet and an army; and as

Marlborough had proposed in 1708, and perhaps before, the two chiefs were to advance to the Somme, and perhaps to reach the capital of France. The war on the Rhine was to be maintained; a great effort was to be made on the Alpine frontier; a combined Austrian and Piedmontese army was to enter Dauphiné and Provençe, to march into Languedoc, and, co-operating with the English fleet, was again to stir up a Huguenot insurrection in Cevennes. Nothing was to be left undone to strengthen the power of the Pretender in Spain — the Emperor angrily insisted on this. Stahremberg, the able lieutenant of Eugene, was to be at the head of a large force; the withdrawal of the greatest part of the armies of France would, it was expected, make his success certain. France, in a word, was to be more severely pressed than ever, by hosts of enemies encircling her on every side. She was on the verge of ruin and would soon be in the abyss. The operations of Louis XIV., as before, were to be defensive only, and were to depend on those of the League. Montesquiou, a new marshal, was to guard the frontier of the north, until Villars was able to assume the command. Villars was then to take the field with his old army. Berwick, whose capacity was again recognised, was to maintain the positions he had successfully held in the Alps; Harcourt, as in 1708, was to cover Alsace; for the present little or nothing was to be done in Spain. The armies, as before, were formidable in numbers and had improved in strength; but, as before, the distress of the State was so intense that the great difficulty was to keep them in the field. The terrible emergency was, however, met, partly owing to the great inherent resources of France, partly to the energy and resolution of a united nation, partly to an administration better than that of later years. Desmaretz, the new War

Minister, had replaced Chamillart, as head of the finances of the realm; his measures, I have heard, were as judicious as the circumstances allowed. The public debt, indeed, was hardly at all paid, and recourse was had to the old and bad expedients by which money was raised; but the modes by which the revenue was collected were made less onerous, and a great tax was imposed on the land which not only brought in large funds to the Treasury, but was more just and well conceived than the other taxes.

I was well informed of these events and of those that followed, up to the close of this mighty contest, for I was often in attendance on Villars at Versailles. I heard much from him and from the gossip of the Court. Besides, the king took the nation, so to speak, into his confidence; nearly everything that occurred was tolerably well known. The wound of my chief was slow to heal; he angrily chafed at this enforced inaction; the spring had advanced before he could take the field; even then he was scarcely able to ride a charger; the injured knee, bound in a framework of steel, gave continual pain. Meanwhile, Marlborough and Eugene had opened the campaign; they issued out of Tournay at the end of April 1710, with 60,000, soon increased to 120,000 men, trained to victory, and rightly trusting in two great captains. Their first operations were unfavourable to our arms. They took Montesquiou, not a superior man, by surprise, and forced our lines; they then sate down before the great stronghold of Douay, in the second range of the fortified bulwarks of France. The place made a long and skilful resistance. Meanwhile, Villars had reached his army in May. He had the assistance, at his own request, of Berwick, to support him in the field and to give him counsel. Our army was not far from

100,000 strong, but under Montesquiou its discipline had been impaired. There were many complaints against the young officers, as there had been in the beginning of 1709. The marshal, however, soon put all this to rights; he had a fascinating power over the hearts of his men; no general has ever got more out of a French army. Villars advanced into the plains between Arras and Douay, and offered battle to the army covering the siege; but his adversaries refused a trial of strength, and held positions of defence on the Scarpe. My chief railed at what he called feeble conduct; but his enemies probably took the right course.[1] Indeed, he soon abandoned his offensive attitude; he had received orders from Versailles to husband his forces. Douay fell in the last days of June, having kept its assailants long before its walls. Villars had had information of the projected descent from England, and of the march to the Somme that was to be made. He took positions not far from Arras, and began fortifying lines along the stream of the Canche, which gradually became a barrier almost reaching to the sea. Meanwhile, his adversaries had laid siege to Béthune, another fortress on the same range as Douay; the place did not surrender until the end of August, but the marshal was still apprehensive of the twofold attack.[2] To his amazement, Marlborough and

[1] My kinsman's opinion is correct. Marlborough, *Coxe*, III., p. 48, wrote to his wife:—"Our situation at this time is so advantageous that we shall have no action before the taking of this place unless they act contrary to reason." Villars, too, felt that it was judicious not to attack, *Mémoires*, III., p. 85:—"La vérité est que de les vouloir attaquer, quoique supérieures et entranchés, c'eût été une enterprise contraire à toute raison." It is interesting to see the two adversaries take the same view.—EDITOR.

[2] Villars's *Mémoires*, III., p. 92:—"On avoit dit que les ennemis embarquoient un grand nombre de troupes en Angleterre, et qu'ils vouloient tenter une descente vers les côtes de Picardie; en quel cas toutes leurs forces, après le siège de Béthune, pouvoient marcher a Montreuil."—EDITOR.

Eugene made no attempt to advance, but turned aside to besiege the little places of St Venant and Aire, as in 1709 they had turned aside to besiege Tournay.

The conduct of the allied chiefs, it is now known, was not as wanting in enterprise as Villars supposed. The intended descent from England was never made. Eugene wished to give the marshal battle, but was prevented by the Dutch in his camp—the memories of Malplaquet were still fresh in their minds.[1] Marlborough was probably afraid to strike a bold stroke, beset as he was by a storm of faction rising against him at home.[2] St Venant fell in September, and two months afterwards the invasion of the north of France once more had well-nigh failed. Four fortresses had, no doubt, been captured, but the losses of the Allies in these sieges had been enormous. Not a hostile soldier had appeared on the Somme. The lines of Villars were stretching across the whole northern frontier. On the other theatres of the war the operations of the League had also been baffled or completely frustrated. No attempt was made to invade Alsace. Harcourt successfully defended the course of the Rhine. Berwick, who had parted from Villars before the fall of Douay, conducted for the second time a campaign in the Alps, marked by ability of a very high order. His adversary, Daun, crossed the Greater Alps, and entered Dauphiné with largely superior forces. He reached the Durance and

[1] *See* Villars's *Mémoires*, III., p. 95.—EDITOR.

[2] My kinsman's surmise is correct. *See* a letter from Marlborough to Godolphin, *Coxe*, III., p. 135 :—"The little consideration the queen has for you and me makes it not safe for me to make any proposal for the employing those regiments now in the Isle of Wight; though, if things were as formerly, I could attempt a project on the sea coast that might prove advantageous." Marlborough was much depressed throughout this campaign. *See* a remarkable letter to the duchess, *Coxe*, III., p. 39.—EDITOR.

threated Gap; but he was defeated by the marshal, and had to recross the mountains. As for the Huguenots in Languedoc, they did not venture to rise. An English squadron made a descent on the coast and disembarked a body of troops at Cette, but the raid was prevented by a part of our army under Marshal Noailles, and the Huguenots were kept down by the loyal men of the province. The conflict in Spain was of doubtful issue for a time, but the arms of Philip V. had before long triumphed. When the great king had withdrawn the chief part of his forces, Philip had tried to create a national army, in addition to his irregular levies; but he was defeated by Stahremberg, near Saragossa. He was compelled to fly from Madrid into Leon. He had steadily refused to descend from his throne. Louis sent him Vendôme to maintain his cause, and a considerable detachment of French troops. Fortune had soon turned against the Pretender. Vendôme, eager to retrieve a reputation he had lost, made great efforts to restore the defeated army. He received powerful support from the insurrection of the nation in arms. He marched against Stahremberg, who had made himself detested by many deeds of destruction and rapine. An English division was routed, and had to give up its arms at a place called Brihuega, in the Castilles. Stahremberg was defeated at Villa Viciosa, in the same province, and was driven into Catalonia, beyond the Ebro.

The Grand Alliance had thus, on the whole, failed in the eventful campaign of 1710. In the words of a great English Catholic poet—

> "The milk-white hind, though doomed to death,
> Was fated not to die."

France, stricken and worn-out, still defied her foes. Her principal champion had been beyond dispute

Villars. Meanwhile memorable events had taken place in England, which ultimately were to give a new turn to the war. The Whigs, always eager for a conflict with France, had been supreme in the State for some years; they had pressed hostilities against the great king to the utmost. But the Tories, friendly to the House of Stuart, even to Louis XIV., had been growing in power of late; and the majority of Englishmen, there is little doubt, had, for different reasons, been inclining to peace with France. The cost of the war had been prodigious; it had mainly been defrayed by immense loans, which anticipated the resources of the State. Reasonable men were indignant that England had been made the chief paymaster of a selfish and greedy League of Allies. Wise men had begun to fear that the nation could not bear an overwhelming burden. After Oudenarde, too, the Coalition had had little success; its losses in the field had been enormous. Malplaquet had virtually been a reverse for its arms; the carnage of that day had made the boldest spirits pause. The administration, besides, of the men in office had been severely condemned. Complaints had been made of lavish waste of the funds of the State, of the grossest corruption of many kinds, and of neglect in protecting merchant shipping at sea. The navy of France had no doubt declined, but the injury done to English trade by light vessels had been immense. Owing mainly also to the events of the war, the monied interest, as it was called, had become a great power in England, and was cordially disliked by classes which had strong influence. The ascendency of "stockjobbers" and "loanmongers" was hateful to the aristocracy of the land, and to the heretic Church, both wholly devoted to the Tory party. There was a great movement in England

in favour of peace, and this had the support of Queen Anne, a Stuart, and a true Tory at heart, whose mind had been swayed for some years by Tory intrigues. A vehement reaction against the Whigs set in; this was accelerated by a foolish attack on the Church, in the instance of a noisy heretic parson. The queen suddenly dismissed the Whigs from office and appointed a Tory administration in their stead. A dissolution of Parliament gave the Tories a large majority in the House of Commons, since the revolution the supreme power in the State; this was desirous of bringing the war to a close. The leaders of the majority were two very different men. Harley, a moderate Tory, but an artful and double-minded courtier, was ready to do anything in his selfish interests; St John, afterwards the renowned Lord Bolingbroke, a strong Tory, but a deep-thinking statesman who thoroughly disliked the system of loans and the recent administration of affairs, despised and distrusted the Coalition, and, though an Englishman who looked to his country's real interests, had sympathies with the Stuarts and the great king. He was a man of noble presence and of world-wide fame; I often beheld him when in exile at Versailles.

Ths revolution in England—it was scarcely less—soon made its influence felt on the course of events. The first overtures for peace on the side of our enemies came from the ministers of the Power which had been foremost in maintaining and prolonging the war. An obscure envoy was despatched from London to Versailles; he had an interview with Torçy, who directed the foreign affairs of France. He intimated —this I heard from Villars himself—that England was willing to treat with Louis XIV. A series of dealings, at first concealed from the League, followed. It was understood that the terms of peace

were to be not very different from those proposed by William III. in 1701-02; that is, Philip V. was to have Spain and the Indies, but great concessions were to be made to the Allies, and especially to England, their real head; these were to be partly the same as those Louis had lately offered. The Dutch, and notably Heinsius, were furious when informed of this complete change in the position of affairs, but they had lost their opportunity, and resistance was vain. The negotiations were conducted between the Courts of St James and Versailles; the majority of the Allies acquiesced. One circumstance of extreme moment strengthened the resolution of the English ministers to bring the war to a close. The Emperor Joseph died suddenly in the spring of 1711; his brother Charles, the Pretender in Spain, was the heir to his vast German dominions, and probably would succeed to the empire. St John, the true chief of the Tories in office, was determined that the supremacy of Charles V. should not be resisted in Europe, and that peace with France was a necessity for the civilised world. War, however, was for the time to continue, until the conditions of a treaty had been arranged. Whatever may be said, St John was not false to the cause of his country. He distrusted Marlborough, but knew what were Marlborough's powers; he left the great captain in command of the forces he had led, and took care that they should be powerful and amply supplied. The plans of the operations of the contending Powers were to be much the same as the plans of the year before, but they gave less proof of a purpose to strike France down, except perhaps upon the northern frontier. Marlborough and Eugene were again to invade Artois, and, if possible, to reach the Somme; Villars was again to be their opponent. Hostilities were to be carried on along the Rhine, the Alps, and in

Spain. The same chiefs were to confront each other, but the armies were to be largely reduced; in fact, the exhaustion caused by the terrible conflict was universally felt. One incident was of good omen for France, the wound of my chief was now completely healed, though he was a lame man for the rest of his life; the Du Guesclin of France was himself again.

The campaign in the north opened early in the spring. Heinsius and Eugene, eager to deal a decisive blow, had their preparations made as quickly as possible; Marlborough had been given a free hand by the men in power in England. The two great chiefs advanced from the frontier with probably 120,000 men, and made demonstrations against Arras, another of the strongholds of Artois; but Villars opposed them with perhaps an equal force, and made a movement as if to recapture Douay. The hostile armies now confronted each other for weeks in the space between the Scarpe and the Sanset,[1] affluents of the Scheldt and the fortress of Cambray and Douay. The marshal had orders from Versailles to avoid a battle, and to do his utmost to preserve his troops. His adversaries were not less circumspect; in truth, they had a sufficient reason. Throughout the winter Villars had been strengthening his lines; they now formed an immense and powerful barrier, extending across Artois and French Hainault from the sea along the Canche to the Scheldt, and thence to the Sambre. They rested on a chain of fortresses still belonging to France, and were fortified by the resources of art; they were an obstacle difficult in the extreme to overcome; if overcome anywhere, they would still greatly retard an enemy. Eugene left his colleague towards the end of July, in order to watch events in Germany, where the elections to the empire were in progress; he

[1] Now the Censee.—EDITOR.

took a considerable body of troops with him. Marlborough carried out operations which, if extravagantly praised, and not in any real sense decisive, gave, nevertheless, proof of his admirable resource in the field. By this time the army of Villars had been much weakened by detachments to the Rhine and elsewhere; but he had held the enemy in check, and had won a few petty engagements. He had now placed the mass of his forces behind his lines, between the course of the Canche and Arras, at a distance, however, from the lines on the Sanset and the Scheldt, between the strong places of Cambray and Douay; the last, it will be borne in mind, being in the hands of the Allies. Marlborough, breaking up from his camps, made towards the heads of the Lys, in order to mask his real purpose and to induce his antagonist to follow his lead; he then countermarched as if he was about to attack Villars; finally, on the night of the 4th of August, he made a forced march of extraordinary speed against our lines, where they had been left unguarded, combining the attack with an attack by the troops who held Douay. This well-conceived manœuvre was but too successful; our lines were turned and forced—and resistance was not possible—near the angle where the Sanset and the Scheldt meet, and not far from the fortress of Cambray.[1]

[1] These fine operations of Marlborough, a masterpiece of the military art, are fairly described by my kinsman, but should be studied on a good map. I transcribe Marlborough's account, by far the best, *Despatches*, V., p. 428; and *see* his letter to Eugene, p. 430:—"I marched from Cette to Rebruve and Villa Breslin to draw the Maréchal de Villars, with all his troops, that way, while I was taking measures to pass on this side, having to that purpose left a good garrison at Douay. . . . These troops marched to Arleux, and passed at break of day without any opposition; the whole army marched likewise this way as soon as it was dark, and about nine in the morning I joined one detachment with the horse of our left, the rest of the army followed, and, after marching twenty-four hours with great cheerfulness and without

Villars followed his adversary in hot haste, and, drawing the greatest part of his army together, offered Marlborough battle in the plains of Cambray. The position of the marshal was favourable to a great trial of strength; he was protected by the fortress, two villages and far-spreading marshes. A victory for his arms would place his enemy in the gravest straits, for he would be forced back into the narrow space between the Sanset and the Scheldt. It is said that the Dutch, egged on by Heinsius, were eager to fight, but Marlborough was too great a chief to run unnecessary risks; he turned to the best account the advantage he had already won, crossed the Scheldt with his army and laid siege to Bouchain.[1] The fortress was not of great strength, but its garrison made a stubborn defence, and it was attacked in the presence of a large French army hardly inferior in numbers to the besieging force. Villars made two efforts in vain to raise the siege on both banks of the Scheldt, but he was badly seconded by his lieutenants; redoubts they had constructed were successfully stormed, and the low grounds between his camp and the fortress were flooded swamps. Marlborough maintained the investment and clung

halting, were all passed last night, and, as they arrived, drew up in order of battle. The Maréchal de Villars soon took the alarm, and marched likewise with great diligence most part of the night, hoping to have prevented us."—EDITOR.

[1] Marlborough was unquestionably right in the course he took. He thus describes the situation, *Coxe*, III., p. 231:—"His (Villars's) right rested on Cambray, his centre was covered by those two villages with the hollow roads, and his left by the marsh of Inchy. Hence you see that, in this situation, it was impracticable for us to attack him, and we had no other measures to take than first to pass the Scheldt, lest he should anticipate us." Villars was evidently greatly annoyed that Marlborough did not attack, *Mémoires*, III., p. 129:—"Le Maréchal de Villars y marcha et se mit en bataille dans les plaines de Cambray, ne pouvant pas croire qu'un ennemi, qui la lui avoit présentée, manquât l'occasion de la donner a terrain égal, surtout l'armée du roi ayant été affoibliê par des détachements de plus de 30 bataillons et de 45 escadrons."—EDITOR.

to his quarry; Bouchain fell in the second week of September. The wits of Versailles had their fling at my chief; he had declared his lines impassable and they had been forced; he was severely condemned for not falling on his adversary when spread around Bouchain.[1] But, besides that, an effort of this kind would have been hazardous in the extreme, regard being had to the difficulties of the ground, he had been positively ordered to spare his army, and not to fight unless certain of success, and it is well known that, at the close of the campaign, he was cordially welcomed by his master at Versailles.[2] The gain, too, of Marlborough had been but small; his losses at the siege of Bouchain had been immense; he was unable to undertake the siege of Le Quesnoy, a little fortress on the same range as Bouchain; and, if the lines of Villars had been carried at one point, they were practically as formidable a barrier of defence as ever.

My chief—I wish simply to tell the truth—had been out-manœuvred by Marlborough in July and August; our lines had been turned, and this was a very fine exploit. But all this only proves what Villars has often dwelt on, that defences of this kind can be usually forced with success; and, as I have just said, the results were in no sense important. Marlborough and the marshal were not to meet again in the field; I may glance at what they achieved when opposed to each other. English writers have boasted that the warrior, of whom they are justly proud, gave proof of his superiority as a general in 1709, 1710 and 1711, and have described Villars as an

[1] As usual, Saint Simon was prominent among these detractors. See *Mémoires*, VI., pp. 176, 180. His statements are partly false and partly misleading; they have deceived many English writers who have not done justice to Villars.—EDITOR.

[2] Even Saint Simon acknowledges this, *Mémoires*, VI., p. 180.—EDITOR.

untruthful braggart, skilful and able indeed, but no match for Marlborough.[1] Impartial history tells a very different tale. The real victor in these grand passages of arms was Villars, whose genius has not been fully recognised even in France, for he was still beset, in these years, by detractors at Versailles. Marlborough, with the aid of Eugene, won Malplaquet in a mere military sense, and took several strong places on our northern borders; he forced our lines at one point and captured Bouchain. But Villars dealt the League a destructive blow at Malplaquet; he practically confined the war to a single province; he baffled his adversary over and over again; his lines made a march to the Somme impossible, and ultimately proved the salvation of France. The magnificent success he was ere long to achieve was due to his admirable operations at this period; and no praise is too high for the illustrious chief, who breathed his heroic spirit into an army of recruits, and made it what it was, under the very eyes of his enemies. It is unnecessary to dwell on the results of the war on its other theatres in 1711. The Imperial Elections kept Germany in suspense; few of the German princes sent their full contingents into the field; nothing worth recording was done on the Rhine. The Duke of Savoy led an army across the main range of the Alps, but he was defeated by Berwick on the Isère and was driven out of the Duchy with heavy loss. The reputation of Berwick had reached its highest; next to Villars he was the first of our warriors. In Spain, the Pretender Charles had left the kingdom, had taken possession

[1] This false conception of Villars, mainly due to the calumnies of Saint Simon, has been handed down to our time by different English writers, notably by ill-informed soldiers. The only true conception of this illustrious commander contained in the English tongue has been formed by my distinguished and lamented friend, the late Colonel Malleson.—EDITOR.

of his Austrian realm, and had been made Emperor with the title of Charles VI.; the cause of Philip V. had by this time triumphed, but little was accomplished in the open field. It should be added that the Portuguese, who had taken part in the war under pressure from England, had suffered a terrible reverse in their colony of Brazil; Rio Janeiro was almost destroyed by a French fleet.

The campaign of 1711 had hardly closed, before France rang with exulting joy at the intelligence of the sudden fall of her most dangerous enemy. Marlborough had been the master spirit of the Grand Alliance; he had been illustrious in the field and in council alike; his name was a word of terror in every French town and village. I heard a great deal about this momentous event from my brother Maurice, then rising in the law in England, and from Dr Swift, who, I have said, was a kind of acquaintance: the story was told me when, years afterwards, I returned for the first time to the land of my birth. Marlborough and his wife, when the Spanish War began, were absolute rulers of Queen Anne; the Parliament and the people of England were for a time spellbound, so to speak, by the renown of his victories. Yet even in those days a few voices were raised denouncing him as a kind of Mayor of the Palace; before long he began to be censured for partiality, and even for corruption, as head of the army. The Parliament for some years was composed of Tories and Whigs in tolerably equal numbers; but after 1705 the Whigs acquired a distinct preponderance, and the Whigs for several reasons disliked Marlborough, while, though a moderate Tory himself, he was not loved by the Tories. For some time he continued, with his friend Godolphin, to play the two parties against each other; but this balancing statecraft was not successful; in fact, he

was not pre-eminent as an English statesman; he did not understand the England of his day, transformed by the revolution into a free Parliamentary state; he never had a seat in the English House of Commons. Meanwhile the charges against him increased and became more distinct; they were aggravated by one of the few mistakes he made in his career. He urged the queen to give him the supreme command of her forces for life; this, in an age that retained memories of Cromwell, was a very dangerous course. Anne refused to grant a request even Marlborough's colleagues condemned. At the same time, his wife abused her authority over her royal mistress; they gradually became more and more estranged. The duchess, though a Whig, was disliked by the Whigs, chiefly on account of a shrewish and imprudent temper; she was supplanted at Court by Harley and an intriguing woman in his pay. Marlborough had become extremely unpopular in 1710 and 1711; the Parliament withheld the customary vote of thanks; he was vehemently attacked by a host of libellers, of whom Dr Swift was the most conspicuous. Soon after the Tories had come into power, the queen and her late favourite openly quarrelled; the duchess was dismissed from her place at Court, was insulted and charged with cheating her mistress. Marlborough, not unnaturally, was indignant at this; he also steadily opposed the conditions of peace in his place in Parliament, and he was supported in this view by a large following in the English House of Lords. He had, in a word, become the main obstacle to the policy of the men in office. St John threw him over when he found he could not make him his tool; availing himself of the outcry against Marlborough, now loud and widespread, he had charges of peculation and gross misconduct preferred against him.

A majority of the House of Commons declared the accusations true; Marlborough was immediately deprived of the command of the army, thrust out of all the offices he held, and publicly disgraced. A kind of reaction in his favour set in. Eugene, his great companion in arms, pleaded for him with the queen; but these efforts proved abortive, and St John triumphed. How far Marlborough was guilty of all that he was charged with will, perhaps, never be known; he was not brought to trial by the Tory Government; but splendid as his genius was, there was baseness in it; his avarice and love of self were notorious; and though he was restored to office after the death of Queen Anne, he never regained the great position he had lost. Unlike Eugene and Villars, he was not mourned by his countrymen. In the words of the great playwright of England, "there are damned spots" in his fame.

By this time the negotiations for peace had been removed to Utrecht, a town of some importance in Holland. Envoys from the continental Powers were assembled; but the influence of England, the great paymaster, was supreme. In the early spring of 1712, mournful events filled the Court and even France with sorrow; they had a marked effect on what was taking place at Utrecht. The only son of the great king—I set bastards aside—had died the year before; the Duke of Burgundy had long been the acknowledged heir to the monarchy. He was a soldier, and, as I have shown, was a bad leader in the field; but he had been educated with the greatest care; he had given promise of being an accomplished statesman. His consort, the fair daughter of the Duke of Savoy, had since her marriage been the idol of the Court; her dignity, her grace, her charming converse, had been the delight of the aged king; she had been his solace in these times of disasters, and

had won the heart of the frigid and unbending Maintenon. The youthful pair suddenly sickened and died; one of their sons, a mere child, was also carried away. The right to the Crown of France devolved on another child, the Duke of Anjou, now His Majesty Louis XV. Owing to these calamities, Philip V. was brought within a step from the throne of Louis XIV., two frail lives only stood in his way; it was not improbable that the monarchies of France and Spain would be united in the person of one sovereign. The Grand Alliance naturally would not tolerate this; months were spent in taking what were called securities against an event that would imperil the repose, perhaps the safety of Europe. Ormond, the grandson of the Ormond of my youth, had now replaced Marlborough in the command of the forces belonging to England or in her pay. He was a commonplace chief, without shining parts; it is now known that he was not to take active operations in the field, though it had been given out that the war was to go on, on the theatres where it had been waged before. Villars was to oppose Eugene and Ormond in the north; but the great king was apprehensive that the enemies would be in largely superior force, and might be able to march to the Somme, and even to reach Paris. He summoned the marshal to his choice retreat at Marly—his Hermitage, as the lovely abode was called. I was an eye-witness of a grand and most pathetic scene. The Court was in attendance in deep mourning; anxiety and grief were on many faces; the king was clad in black velvet, with the star of one of his orders on his breast. Stepping out of the circle, Louis spoke these touching words to Villars. "I have suffered much," he said, "and am punished by the Most High; but at this moment I must think of the affairs of the State. I have placed the main

army and the destinies of France in your hands, a mark of the confidence I have in your powers. But Fortune may betray you; you may suffer defeat. In that event, I am told I ought to fall back to the Loire. But my purpose is to betake myself to the Somme; we will there collect the remains of the army; we will fight, and save France, or perish together." My chief bowed his assent to this noble resolve. "The great king," he said, when he left the presence, "was never so truly great."[1]

Eugene and Ormond had taken the field in May, at the head of the largest hostile force that had yet appeared in the north. Eugene detested the idea of a peace with Louis XIV., and was burning to advance at any risk on Paris. The enemies issued from Bouchain and moved towards Cateau Cambresis, a place not far from the Upper Sambre, as if to turn the strongholds of Artois; this was an operation never attempted before; their evident purpose was to push on to the Somme. Villars had taken the command of our army some weeks before. He had probably about 100,000 men; he had reconnoitred the course of the river; he was prepared to give his enemies battle between the fortresses of St Quentin and Péronne. A pause took place in the enemy's movements; it became known to the marshal that Ormond was not to fight, but Ormond entreated him to do nothing until a truce had been made with England. Eugene, incensed with what he called the bad faith of a colleague, fell back and laid siege to Le Quesnoy, the fortress Marlborough had not taken the year before; the fall of the place would facilitate the operations on which the prince was resolved. The truce was before long made public; Ormond assembled the whole of the chiefs of his army, and

[1] For a full account of this scene, *see* Villars's *Mémoires*, III., pp. 138, 139.—EDITOR.

ordered them to recross the frontier; but the Germans refused to stir a step, and declared they would obey Eugene. Ormond was only able to take away some 16,000 men; he retreated with these into the Low Countries. Le Quesnoy capitulated in the first days of July. Eugene, despite the "defection" of Ormond, was still superior in force to Villars; with characteristic daring he formed the design of marching straight on Paris, taking a direction not thought of hitherto in this war. He resolved to lay siege to Landreçy, a fortress upon the Sambre. The place, he was convinced, would not hold out long; after its fall he would advance to the capital of France, descending by the open valley of the Oise, the old line of Spanish invasion in a bygone age. This enterprise would be obviously bold, nay, rash; Eugene would have to pass a double range of fortresses on his right, and would probably have to encounter the army of Villars; a defeat in this situation would be perhaps destruction. But this was not all, or even nearly all. The main depôt of Eugene's supplies was at Marchiennes, on the Scarpe, thirty miles distant; he had indeed one intermediate depôt at Dénain, on the Scheldt, a small place where he had a garrison; this was connected with Marchiennes by a series of ancient lines. But Dénain was nearly twenty miles from Landreçy; what would happen should the enemy seize this point and lay hold of the communications of the prince with his base?

Eugene had invested Landreçy by the third week of July; he covered the siege with the greater part of his forces. Villars was at Cambray, with the mass of his army, some twenty miles from the beleaguered fortress. The prince thought his adversary would not make an offensive movement, reasoning from the attitude of the marshal when before Bouchain. Eugene was wholly mistaken in this view; he was

to pay dearly for operations imprudent in the extreme. I held by this time a high place on the staff of my chief, and took an active part in the memorable events that followed. Villars left Cambray with a small escort, and, having crossed the Sambre and two small rivers, reconnoitred the enemy's investing lines. He made up his mind that a direct attack would be perilous; he resolved to fall on the communications of Eugene, and to seize Dénain. His intention was masked with great care and skill; it was given out that a march to Landreçy was to be made; demonstrations were made upon Sambre, false intelligence was circulated to deceive the enemy. In the meantime bridges were to be thrown across the Scheldt, not far from Dénain; the country was scoured by light horsemen to arrest deserters, and to prevent news leaking out. The marshal kept his purpose quietly to himself, his lieutenants and his staff had no inkling of it. On the night of the 23rd July the army moved against Landreçy, in conformity with the positive orders of its chief. In a few hours, however, to the amazement of the officers and men, it counter-marched rapidly to the Scheldt; it reached the bank of the river soon after daybreak; by the early forenoon it had got over the bridges. I well bear in mind the joyous looks of my chief. "Give me my buff coat," he said to one of his followers, "and let us drink to the success of the day." The warrior felt that his quarry was within his grasp. The army was now in full march on Dénain; a deep swamp stopped one column for a time, but the exulting soldiery boldly struggled through. The old lines from Marchiennes—they were called "the road to Paris"—were assailed and stormed; the ramparts and the entrenchments of Dénain were before us. A timid lieutenant of Villars's began to talk of fascines, but my chief knew

that Eugene had heard of the movement, and was on his way to support the garrison. "Our only fascines," he exclaimed, "will be the bodies of our men." Dénain was surrendered after a fierce but short struggle; we were, in fact, in irresistible force. The troops of the defence, 8000 or 9000 strong, made an attempt to cross the Scheldt, and to reach the army of Eugene, advancing as quickly as possible to their relief. But the bridges near the fortress suddenly broke down: these unfortunate men were all drowned or captured. The prince tried to cross the river at a point lower down, but he found our soldiers in possession of the bridge; he lost heavily and was compelled to retreat.

This splendid exploit did not cost us 500 men; it cost the enemy at least 10,000, and made us masters of his depôt at Dénain. The result, however, was far more important than this: Eugene had lost his communications, and was on the other side of the Scheldt, without the means of readily passing the stream; the way to Marchiennes, his main depôt, was open. Villars pounced on his quarry and took the place: between 5000 and 6000 men were made prisoners; a number of cannon and a vast store of supplies were captured. We now held nearly the whole course of the Scarpe; Villars, seizing the occasion with admirable skill, and multiplying himself, so to speak, with his energy, sate down before Douay, which had fallen two years before. The investment was complete by the first week of August. By this time, Eugene, deprived of his bases at Dénain and Marchiennes, had been forced to draw away from Landreçy; he had marched down the Scheldt and reached Tournay. Having in some measure restored his army, he advanced to Douay, in the hope of raising the siege. But Villars had made his lines impregnable: he was now far superior

to the prince in force, having been joined by detachments from Valenciennes and other strong places. His adversary felt unable to offer battle with an inferior army that had lost heart; after some days he was in retreat on Tournay. Douay fell in the second week of September, with a loss to the enemy of 3000 men. My indefatigable chief turned against Le Quesnoy, taken by his antagonist two or three months before. The fortress capitulated early in October. It contained a prize of hundreds of heavy guns and of munitions in immense quantities; the garrison was made prisoners of war. Yet even now Villars was not satisfied. He was one of those men who think nothing done when there was something to do. He attacked Bouchain, which soon fell. Eugene, utterly discomfited, had left the scene, and had retreated into the Spanish Netherlands, with his army, in despair. The enemy had been driven out of our northern frontier by exploits equal to the best deeds of Condé and Turenne; Villars stood out as the true successor of those mighty masters of war. But it should be borne in mind that but for his celebrated lines, which for years had been a bulwark of France, this magnificent success would have been impossible.[1]

Except on our borders, the war had languished on its other theatres in 1712. Nothing

[1] These fine operations of Villars are described at length in his *Mémoires*, III., pp. 157, 176. There is no sufficient English account; *Napoleon's Sketch Corr.*, pp. 32, 128-129, is not quite correct, but is admirable. I transcribe the Emperor's comments on the faults committed by Eugene:—"Le Prince fit plusieurs fautes à Landrecies. 1°, de prétendre communiquer avec son dépôt de Marchiennes tous les jours sans escorte, mettant sa confiance dans les lignes si étendues, aussi faibles et si mal gardées; 2°, d'avoir placé sa réserve sur la rive gauche de l'Escant; éloignée de son camp de trois lieues et séparée par cette rivière." The distance was much more than three French leagues. For a valuable chapter on the results to an enemy of the loss of his communications, see *Pierron Stratégie et Grande Tactiques*, I., pp. 1, 81. The plan of the operations at Dénain is a very fine old engraving.—EDITOR.

of the least importance occurred on the Rhine; the needy German princes, deprived of English subsidies, were unable to send their full contingents into the field. The Duke of Savoy was engaged in making favourable terms for himself: in Spain, little or nothing was done, though the sudden death of Vendôme gave the enemy a chance. But the troops in the pay of England were withdrawn from Spain; the Catalans alone—they were basely betrayed afterwards—feebly resisted the arms of Philip V. The negotiations at Utrecht meanwhile had been in progress; the triumphs of Villars had made a profound impression. The Dutch especially were eager for peace; they had begun to fear that invaders might be seen among their dykes. With the exception of the Emperor, who sought to prolong the contest—he was swayed by Eugene, frantic at his late defeats—the Allies had virtually placed their interests in the hands of England. The difficulty as to the possible union of the Crowns of France and Spain had been removed by a solemn pledge given by Louis XIV.; peace was signed at Utrecht in April 1713. This great settlement had much in common with the conditions offered by William III. many years before, but modified notably for the behoof of England, by the negotiations which had been going on for two years. Spain and the Indies were to be the monarchy of Philip V.; the Allies in this respect had been baffled. But large concessions were made to the Coalition; England, its real head, had the lion's share of the spoil. She obtained Nova Scotia, as it is now called, and Newfoundland, the gates of Canada upon the Atlantic, besides other American lands of France; she kept Gibraltar and Minorca, her late conquests; Dunkirk, a menace to her trade at sea, was dismantled. But these were not her only gains. She acquired a monopoly of the

commerce in slaves, with the Spanish Indies, a lucrative source of national wealth; and the great king recognised the settlement made by her Parliament, of the crown. This was to pass to the Hanoverian Protestant line—the House of Stuart was completely excluded. As for the Allies, the Dutch were to be given a strong barrier in the Low Countries, as a bulwark against France. Austria, subject to this, was to possess the Spanish Netherlands, with the exception of a small territory conferred on Prussia, and to have, besides, the mainland of Spanish Italy. The Duke of Savoy was to regain his Duchy of Nice, and to obtain two fortresses on his side of the Alps; the great Island of Sicily too, was to belong to him. The Elector of Bavaria was to have Sardinia, if not restored to his hereditary German dominions. These concessions were made at the expense of France and of Spain, but they were very different from what had been insisted on a few years before. France lost vast possessions in America, but these were not deemed of much value at the time; she lost fortresses to make a barrier for the Dutch; she ceded a great deal to the Duke of Savoy. But she regained Lille and other captured strongholds; her frontiers remained well-nigh intact; she was not dismembered as her enemies had hoped. As for Spain, her losses appeared to be great; but these were of outlying parts of a huge and unwieldy monarchy.

The Emperor might have been satisfied with the Peace of Utrecht; it secured to the House of Austria immense gains. But he was carried away by pride and the counsels of Eugene; he resolved to continue the war; a few German princes concurred. Eugene was sent to the frontier of the Rhine. He placed a large army behind the lines of Ettlingen, an extension of the old lines of Stollhofen; he appears to

have meant to take the offensive. The great king, as was to be expected, gave Villars the command of his army in Alsace. It was not equal in numbers to that of the enemy; but this inferiority was relieved by the genius of my chief; he set the seal on his glory in another immortal campaign. Having sent detachments of troops to threaten the lines, he crossed the lines at Philipsburg with the mass of his forces, after a march of extraordinary speed; he then occupied Spires and the adjoining country. This bold movement isolated Landau, on the French bank of the river—the place I have related fell after Blenheim—large reinforcements soon poured in to the marshal; he laid siege to Landau, and had taken it near the close of August 1713. Eugene had not attempted to stir from his camps. Villars was now master of part of the German bank of the Rhine; he made the most of the advantages he had won; he resolved to attack and capture Freybourg, at the entrance of the Black Forest. He had never lost sight of his grand project of ten years before; had the war continued he would have marched to the Danube. Freybourg, celebrated since the days of Condé and Turenne, was a great fortress defended by a powerful garrison, and shielded by outworks of formidable strength; but nothing could withstand the energy of my chief. The outworks were stormed after a furious assault; the place was invested in the first days of October. A multitude of non-combatants had gathered within the walls, including a number of unlucky women. Villars refused to give permission to these to leave; he insisted when the town had fallen and the governor had retired to the forts within, that the garrison should find food for the citizens. This conduct, I have said, was not very different from that of Rosen at the siege of Derry; but Villars was beyond dispute justified, the siege

was difficult, the season advanced; distress, he rightly calculated, would place Freybourg in his hands. The fortress was surrendered near the end of November; the way to the Danube was now open. Eugene had been unable to leave his lines; it is believed he had not the means to pay his soldiers—he was no longer supported by English gold. These reverses compelled the Emperor to sue for peace; Eugene and Villars received full powers to treat. The two great warriors met at Rastadt; the adversaries of many years had not ceased to be friends. When in attendance on the marshal, I heard, from the lips of Eugene himself, an account, I have said, of some of the passages of the war. There was a great assemblage of German princes at Rastadt, but everything was arranged by Villars and Eugene. Peace was finally made at Baden in 1714. The empire was compelled to cede Landau; the Elector of Bavaria regained his German lands; the Catalans had been abandoned and crushed by Berwick. After a tremendous conflict of twelve years, which had raged from the Scheldt to the Danube, and from the Po to the Tagus, and which had agitated far-distant regions beyond the Atlantic, the civilised world enjoyed repose.[1]

[1] The admirable operations of Villars in 1713, hardly noticed by English writers, are fully described in his *Mémoires*, III., pp. 179-231.—EDITOR.

## CHAPTER XI

AFTER the settlement of Europe at the Peace of Baden, confirming in the main the greater Peace of Utrecht, Villars was received with universal acclaim at Versailles. The tongues of his detractors were silenced for a time; indeed, the position of the marshal in the State had become so commanding that thenceforward they were only heard in ill-natured gossip. The great king embraced him in the presence of the Court, gave him large estates and a provincial government, and—an honour never conferred on a subject before—assigned to him and to the maréchale the rooms of the late Dauphin at Versailles. I could not help contrasting this rise with the fall of Marlborough; but this was not the mere insolent play of fortune; no one ever charged Villars with being a corrupt traitor. Yet there is always a drop of bitterness in the overflowing cup of sweetness; Louis XIV. refused my chief the sword of Constable of France; the power of Henri de Montmorençy and his fate were still living traditions. By this time I had passed my fortieth year, and felt the fatigue of many trying campaigns; I was glad to receive a long leave of absence from my chief, and to repair to the house of my wife's family. I was now the father of five children, two sons being prepared for the army; three daughters, happily wedded in after years. Estelle while I was on duty in the field usually lived with her parents in their Norman château. I passed several months in this quiet

retreat—it is unnecessary to say what my feelings were at enjoying a season of fresh happiness, which seemed to me like a new union. Causes of sorrow and sadness, however, were not wanting; Normandy, though one of the best provinces of France, reflected but too truly the universal distress and the deplorable state of the whole kingdom, of which I shall give a short account afterwards. Havre had not half its old number of ships; even stately Rouen wore a look of decay; the small towns and villages had lost thousands of souls; manufactures and agriculture were everywhere in decline. The land, in a word, was no longer a flourishing region. The poverty of the peasantry was generally so great that vassals could not pay the seigneurs their dues. The festive gatherings of the *noblesse* had almost ceased; the harmony of social life was largely broken up. I heard a good deal at this time from my kinsfolk, for peace had been restored, though it was an ominous peace. My brother Maurice was making his way as a lawyer; the Irish exile was doing well in the chief town of England. My mother had died in the religious house, of which she had become the Superior; my sisters lived the holy life to which they had been long devoted. I was affectionately invited to return to Ireland and to behold our lost Offaly once more; but this I felt I could not do with safety. An Irish soldier, who had fought against the Saxon in the long war of the Spanish Succession, would have had but short shrift had he set foot in the land of his birth.

The death of Louis XIV. was the great event of those days; it sent a shock through the whole civilised world. The king had passed his seventy-seventh year; but he had never indulged in vicious excess; his vigorous frame gave promise of extreme old age. But the calamities of the State, and the

cruel grief he had suffered in seeing his nearest and dearest hurried to the grave, had forestalled the inevitable decay of Time. His health sensibly declined after the Peace of Baden. I heard much from my chief of his last moments; indeed, the sorrowful tale was generally known. The devotion of the nation to its great ruler had long ceased; a series of untoward events had turned the hearts of millions against him. He was condemned by many for what had been done to the Huguenots; their emigration had been a heavy loss to the kingdom. His confessor, a stern and austere man, was supposed largely to direct his counsels. He had taken the unpopular side in a fierce religious schism which for some time had been dividing France. But the widespread distress of the mass of the people, which reduced the humbler classes to the extreme of wretchedness, and fell heavily even on the better classes, was the chief cause of the animosity felt against the king. He was charged, after the excitement of the war had passed away, with being the author of the disasters it had brought in its train. Unfortunately, too, the splendours of Versailles had revived for a few months after peace had been made, though Louis had hardly any part in them. He was denounced by libellers as a hard-hearted tyrant. The multitude swallowed these odious calumnies. In the month of August 1715 the king fell ill. It was supposed for a time that he was not in danger, but gangrene in one of his legs set in. It was known at Versailles that his days were numbered. The dying monarch prepared for the dread change at hand with admirable firmness and calm forethought. He committed the great trust of his realm to high officers of the State; he piously resigned himself to his Maker. When he felt his end approaching he sent for the heir

to his throne, the childish son of the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy. He bade him remember God, be true to his subjects, maintain peace, and avoid wars, which, he sadly said, had been the great error of his reign. Even in his agony he had kind words for weeping servants by his side. He was able to repeat the solemn warning of the Church, "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment." He passed away in great pain, on the first day of September, a day France has had good reason to remember. The courtiers to whom he was a demi-god in life had to a man forsaken that bed of death. Even his wife, Maintenon, did not close his eyes; she was an exemplary woman, but had no heart.

I travelled from Normandy with Estelle to witness the obsequies of the great king. The spectacle was a sorry, nay, a most painful sight. The funeral procession to St Denis was ill attended and mean; the people along the roads showed at best indifference, ribald jests and murmurs were occasionally heard. Such was the end of a reign of unparalleled grandeur; it proved how utter is the vanity of earthly things, but it was discreditable to the character of the French nation. As everyone knows, the will of Louis XIV.—he expected, indeed, that this would happen—was annulled by the Parliament of Paris in full session. The Duke of Orleans, the unfortunate chief of Turin, was made regent of the kingdom, with large powers of government; the Duke of Maine, a bastard of the king, was contemptuously thrust aside. One of the results of these important changes in the State was that, apart from the Council of the Regency, as it was called, the representative of the supreme monarchy, subordinate councils were formed, and charged with the administration of different departments of public affairs; for example, the finances,

the navy, and so forth. The control of the army was bestowed on Villars, who had also a place in the higher Council, though not for the present one of its members. The arrangement of the military power of France was at this conjuncture a most arduous task, but it was most admirably carried out by my illustrious chief. It had become necessary to reduce the enormous numbers of soldiers France had lately in the field; but, besides that, it was by no means easy to disband suddenly thousands of armed men, the reduction could not be very large at this moment. A revolution had again taken place in England; the Elector of Hanover, on the death of Queen Anne, had been made king, with the title of George I. The Tory party had fallen, and the Whigs were once more in power, as always hostile to France and her interests. The great king had been charged before his death with an attempt to evade the Treaty of Utrecht. There had been a rising in Scotland on behalf of the Pretender, James III. Marlborough took excellent precautions to put it down. All this threatened another war between France and England. The army, therefore, was only reduced by degrees; it was ultimately formed on a strength of about 150,000 men, not reckoning the feudal militia, nearly equal in numbers. Care was taken to improve the scientific arms, and to have an ample supply of well-trained officers. At the same time a change was made in the organisation of the troops of our race, who had been now for years in the service of France. The Irish Guards of James II. and his queen were distributed among other Irish regiments. The collective array was called the Irish Brigade, and formed a separate division of the whole French army. At this time it numbered, perhaps, 10,000 men; but this number was afterwards largely increased.

I lost my troop of Guards when the Brigade was remodelled; but I was made a major in one of Lord Clare's regiments,[1] in which my son has been long serving. I saw, however, little of this distinguished body of men, save when it was mustered on great occasions of State. Villars insisted that I should remain on his staff, of which I had become a veteran member. As before, I was regularly sent on tours of inspection through France, especially to report on the state of the cavalry; I held this honourable position until I left the army. My time was divided between these journeys in summer, visits to my great chief in his château of Vaux—he had lately given it the ancestral name of Villars—and pleasant months spent in Paris and Normandy; Estelle was not seldom my faithful companion. In this way I acquired a knowledge of the condition of France which not many Frenchmen have perhaps gained. I read, besides, what Vauban had written upon the subject. The aspect of the land, where the war had left its mark, was appalling; even in districts untrodden by the contending armies, it filled a sympathetic mind with affliction. The frontier of the north was almost a waste; its once flourishing towns were, for the most part, wrecks. From the Channel to the Sambre the eye rested on villages in ruins, on desolated homes, on expanses of fertile lands where there was no husbandry. Along the borders of the Rhine, devastated years before, the position of affairs was little better: the olives of Provençe had been well-nigh destroyed; the vine had disappeared in parts of the lands along the Rhone; Languedoc, the scene of the Huguenot rising, was for leagues a desert. But what struck and even surprised me most was the pitiable condition of many of the great cities of France. Hundreds

[1] I only know this from family tradition.—EDITOR.

of houses in Lyons were empty and roofless; its manufacture of velvet and silk had terribly suffered. The great port of Marseilles had hardly a sail on its waters; the trade of Bordeaux with our colonies had been almost ruined. Even more alarming was the state of the great naval arsenals: a large fleet was rotting along the quays of Toulon, another in the roadstead of Brest; our squadrons had long been unable to cope with the English and Dutch navies. Fair France, in a word, was fair France no more; the land was a land of desolation and woe, except in the central region along the Loire, where the armies of the League had never been seen. In Paris alone, saved by the defence of Villars, signs of improvement were to some extent visible. The city, spite of the war, had continued to grow: the hotels of the *noblesse* were increasing; there were several new streets and brilliant new mansions. These evidences however, of augmented luxury and wealth were rather symptoms of evils in the internal state of France, than proofs that the nation was in any sense prospering.

The Government of the Regency addressed itself to mitigate this fearful national distress. Public works were begun in some provinces; starving peasants were employed in restoring canals, in repairing the main roads, in rebuilding bridges. Loans, too, were made to some cities and towns; but the poverty of the Treasury was so great that not much was done in this direction. The finances of the State and the relief of the nation from the burdens of the war were the main questions which the men in power had at this time to deal with. I have glanced at the methods by which France struggled through the ordeal of these terrible years; some were harsh, vexatious, often unjust, but they at least enabled her to surmount the crisis. Different

fiscal expedients were now tried. There were attempts to promote economy in the public service; the pernicious sale of offices ceased; taxation was very largely diminished, though not, I must say, in fair proportions—the nobles and the rich were much better treated than the poor. All this, however, was of little avail. Recourse was had again to evil measures of the past: thousands of offices that had been paid for were abolished; the value of the coinage was arbitrarily changed; at last a great part of the debt of the State was cancelled. This was national bankruptcy no longer disguised. If the Government and the mass of the people gained some advantage, whole classes were suddenly involved in ruin, and the shock given to the credit of France was immense. Villars, I know, did not approve of this policy, which in our conversations he often explained. He used to say that he did not understand finance, but that he hoped he had honesty and common sense. He contrasted our Treasury system with that of England, based on just taxation and the confidence of all classes in the State. A financial revolution had ere long taken place in France, which almost got rid of the remains of the public debt, and to some extent lessened the public charges; but which had also far-reaching consequences of a different kind. The finances fell into the hands of a foreigner of the name of Law; the regent, through life a weak man, was persuaded to establish what was called a Royal Bank, which was to receive the revenues of the State and to discharge whatever it owed in paper, supposed to be represented by gold and silver. At the same time, through the intervention of Law, a great "Company of the Indies" was formed. This was to possess an immense territory across the Atlantic, and virtually to monopolise the foreign trade of France; it was to issue shares to a

body of shareholders, and the shares were to be paid for and transferred in paper. The bidding for the shares was prodigious; they suddenly rose to a fabulous price. Who has not heard of the orgie of the Rue Quincampoix, crowded for weeks by fine ladies and gentlemen in their gilded coaches, and by an eager multitude of all kinds of citizens clamouring to enter the company, and to make rapidly immense fortunes? This frenzy continued for a few months; but it was found ere long that there were no precious metals to exchange for what were mere promises to pay; France, in fact, was flooded with worthless paper. As the result the creditors of the State were ruined wholesale, and the holders of the shares of the company, when the crash came, met the same fate. By these means the debt of the State was almost blotted out, for the creditors were never paid more than a fraction of their claims, and the boasted company sunk well-nigh into nothingness.

This revolution was not one of finances only, it had a marked effect on the course of events in France. A class of artful speculators rose into existence. These men took care to turn the shares of the company, when they had risen to an extravagant price, into lands, houses and things of real value; enormous fortunes were thus permanently made, an immense transfer of all kinds of property took place. The great *noblesse* and the wealthier traders had a lion's share in these demoralising gains; a spirit of reckless gambling and covetous greed possessed the upper classes of society in France, and spread down to the lower orders; the very life of the nation was deeply tainted. If the virtual extinction of the debt of the State relieved the millions of the people, to a certain extent, many evils perhaps overbalanced the good. Villars, who regarded the "paper system of Law" as simply swindling on a colossal scale, always

said that these were great and far-reaching.[1] France revived by degrees as the years rolled on, owing to her fine climate, the fertility of the soil, and the industry and resource of the mass of the nation; but I doubt, even as I write, if she has fully recovered, and a series of untoward events retarded her progress. The Government of the regent and his successors, unlike the Government of the great king, was a weak, thoughtless and ill-informed Government, the intendants and their delegates, who ruled the provinces, in innumerable instances abused their power; the humbler classes suffered from all kinds of oppression; even their taxation gradually increased and became more unjust than of old. At the same time the *noblesse*, and even the lesser seigneurs, began to desert their châteaux and their lands, and to flock in hundreds to Paris and Versailles, more than ever had been the case before. This general "absenteeism," as I have heard it called in Ireland, was injurious to their inferiors in many ways, and even to the whole class of the peasantry; it produced, among other evils, a kind of "absenteeism of the heart" which severed the ties that kept lord and vassal together, and weakened the whole framework of social life in the country. The government, too, of the cities and towns was bad; it had fallen into the hands of officers of the State, who mismanaged and neglected it from their desks in the capital; and as the citizens had been deprived of their old franchises, they had no power to regulate their local affairs. The results were mischievous in a very high degree: it was only in the provinces, where

[1] My kinsman probably exaggerates the results of the financial revolution which passed over France at this juncture. But he has reproduced the ideas of Villars, Saint Simon, and, above all, of Montesquieu. Law, it is well known, has had defenders; he perhaps never intended to deluge France with inconvertible paper, corresponding to the assignats of another age.—EDITOR.

assemblies were still held, that there were evidences of a better order of things.

A variety of causes, moreover, brought into France in those days a train, so to speak, of moral evils, which have not ceased to produce their effects, and have done harm to large parts of the nation. The weakness of a long series of Governments led to quarrels between them and the great bodies of the State. The Parliament of Paris had angry disputes with the Court; this, unknown in the reign of the great king, lessened the veneration that ought to be felt for the throne. The disastrous schism, too, in the Church continued, and rent it into contending factions. I do not pretend to understand the subject; but the respect the Church should command was largely impaired, and this did widespread and far-reaching mischief. I fear, besides, that the heads of the Church, and even many of its leading ministers, were not the champions of the faith of a better time; no Bossuet or Fénélon was seen in this period; the lives of not a few of the clergy caused bad scandals; the salt of the State lost much of its savour; the saving health of the community felt the influence of disease. But the most subtle, and perhaps the worst, of these evils, was the change in the sentiments, the ideas, nay, the tone of opinion, which largely, if gradually, passed over the *noblesse* and the higher classes in France; though this was most conspicuously seen in the capital. The Court of Louis XIV. was decorous, if not wholly pure; the Courts of the regent and of his successors were either foul with vice, or were marked by frivolity, luxury and a reckless love of pleasure and vanity. The bad example thus set went deep down. What was called the best society was fashioned on a type in which, under a brilliant and polished surface, corruption and immorality lurked beneath; religion and the sense of duty almost

disappeared; the great lived for display and a round of social trifling, as if men and women were butterflies fluttering in the sun, and thoughtless of what the morrow would bring forth. In this state of things the authority of parents was laughed at; the sanctity of marriage was deemed foolishness; friendship, faith, honesty, became well-nigh forgotten names; the foundations of virtue were dangerously sapped; the bonds that keep classes together were weakened or broken. These evils, too, were greatly increased by a daring, reckless, but fine literature, which described God, not as our Ruler and Father, but as a mere creative and indifferent force; which represented man, as not formed in his Maker's image, but as a being without conscience, and fashioned by influences from without; and which decried all that hitherto had been held as holy and sacred. I do not say that this moral perversion spread throughout France, but it deeply affected the world of Paris. I witnessed the evil results even in my profession. The army was, no doubt, still an imposing force, but it produced no chiefs of the first order, and comparatively few officers of the best quality; and the soldiery were, in too many instances, addicted to the most odious vices. For the honour of my country it should be said the Irish Brigade was, in this respect, an exception.

The internal condition of France, therefore, was not of good omen in these years; her government at home was ill conducted; the elements of her social order were ill compacted, disunited, in part corrupt and jarring; there was a kind of decomposition in the national life, productive of weakness, nay, portending decay. Her condition as a leading State of the world, and as she stood with respect to foreign Powers, was even more alarming to patriotic Frenchmen, and to those who, like myself, loved

her. For more than half of the reign of the great king France was the arbiter of the affairs of Europe; her supremacy in war and in peace was acknowledged; her generals, her armies, her statesmen, her ministers, were pre-eminent in the opinion of mankind. She had a formidable enemy in William III., who combined three great coalitions against her, and she was brought to the verge of ruin in the terrible Spanish war, but even then her grandeur and power were felt; Louis XIV. died the foremost of the rulers of the earth. All this before long became completely changed, France had fallen from her high place in the nations; England has for years been the first of the Powers of Europe, not, indeed, by reason of her military strength, but owing to her mastery of the seas, her colonial empire, her gigantic commerce, her general welfare. Two other Powers, also, are threatening the influence of France; the Muscovite Peter, a great warrior and statesman, struck down Charles XII. on the field of Pultowa, and annihilated her old ally, Sweden, in the north; Prussia has developed into a strong military State, possessing a large and well-trained army; and if she promises to be a check on the House of Austria, she is subverting the authority of France in Germany. What is called the balance of power has thus been turned against France; and there is no prospect that it will incline again in her favour. Villars often spoke to me on a subject too evident, indeed, to thinking men; he was made a member of the Council of State soon after Louis XV. was placed on the throne; but he regretted the foreign policy of Dubois and Fleury. "Peace, no doubt," he used to say, "is essential to France, but her relations with the other Powers of Europe are conducted on principles not in her true interests. England and Austria are our natural enemies; the first is for-

midable from her immense resources, her irresistible navy, and her power of supporting a great coalition against us; the second has hated us since the days of Charles V., and has vast populations and a great army; both are always ready to unite against France. Spain, on the other hand, is our natural ally; she has been rising in wealth and influence since the Peace of Baden; a grandson of Louis XIV. is upon her throne; it should be the first object of France to support her fleets, and thus to counterbalance the domination of England in the seas. Russia and Prussia, too, ought to be our friends; we might thus regain our position in the north, and have an ally to hold Austria in check in the empire. But we have systematically rejected this wise policy; France has been dragged for years in the wake of England, and has almost become an obsequious vassal; she engaged in an unnatural war with Spain, and took part in the destruction of the Spanish navy, in order to satisfy English jealousy and greed; and she has joined with England to compel Spain to desist from war, and to accept an ignominious peace when Spain and Austria had become allies for a moment. As for Russia and Prussia, we have done nothing with these Powers; the France of the great king has become of little more account in Europe than the England of the two last kings of the House of Stuart."

I left the army in 1731, just after I had completed my sixtieth year. I was still in vigorous health, as I am now, but it was time for a veteran to lay aside his sword. My eldest son, John, had a company in one of Lord Clare's regiments; it was in cantonments near Rouen when I returned home. I was invited to a banquet by these famous soldiers of the Brigade. Not one of the officers recollected Sarsfield and the memorable campaign of 1692-95; two

or three had not forgotten Blenheim and Ramillies; all burned to have their revenge on the Saxon. My next visit was made to Villars; the great marshal "wished to see again," he wrote, "his old and favourite aide-de-camp." I have not described his château before; it was a castellated pile not far from Nevers; he had raised it out of the ruins of a small ancestral mansion, and had surrounded it with a fine chase and a great tract of woodland. The gardens and *parterres* were large and superb; six guns, taken at Dénain, were upon the main terrace, a special gift of the great king; scenes of war and battle animated the painter's canvas in a long range of galleries. One of the most interesting of these pictures was Marlborough's retreat in 1705; my chief, I have said, set peculiar value on this; there was also a portrait of the marshal as Constable of France, which often attracted my musing eyes; he had represented the great office he never attained at the coronation of Louis XV. Villars and the maréchale, as always, were more than gracious to myself. I had a place at a board surrounded by some of the leading men of Europe, ambassadors, ministers, knights of the noblest orders, and by ladies of princely and high estate. The warrior was not far from his eightieth year; he often spoke of his great deeds of arms; he insisted that he would have struck Austria down in 1703 had the Elector of Bavaria not crossed his purpose; he was convinced that but for his fall he would have won Malplaquet. I think, as I have said, he underrated Marlborough, but he acknowledged his great powers in the actual shock of battle; he deemed Eugene his superior in forming the great combinations of war, but occasionally rash, as was notably seen at Dénain. As might have been expected, he rated the French soldiers high, and he had nothing but praise for the soldiers of our race, but he had misgivings as to the

future of the French army; it had declined since the great days of Condé and Turenne. One remark in these conversations I especially bear in mind; Villars had nearly been given the command of an English army, and had hoped to lead it across the Rhine as an auxiliary to a great French army; for England and France, some years before, had been on the point of making war with Austria—a war, however, which never took place. Villars thought very highly of the English soldier: "He is slow and heavy, and must have his belly full, but he fights like a bulldog, and never gives in. I saw the redcoats to my cost at Malplaquet; they were the best of the enemy's troops in the field; I prefer 20,000 Englishmen to 30,000 Germans."[1]

When I bade my chief and the maréchale farewell I little thought I should never behold my benefactor again. I had soon settled with Estelle in the peaceful home in which I have begun afterwards to write these memoirs. By this time M. and Madame de Bacquancourt had died; their children were heads of families in different parts of France; Alphonse, who had risen to the rank of general, but had left the service, was established in his ancestral domain. A soldier had little money to make in the great Spanish war, but I had often received lavish gifts from Villars—his was the open heart and the generous hand; these, added to the ample dowry of my wife, enabled me to buy my *pied de terre* near Rouen, and to pass my declining years in comfort. We took part in the society of the *noblesse* of the province, which had improved as France had revived. I married my daughters to neighbouring seigneurs,

[1] My kinsman's recollection is not at fault. Villars, *Mémories*, V., p. 57, has left it on record:—"Qu'il aimoit mieux vingt mille Anglais que trente mille Allemands." The estimate of Napoleon was far higher of English troops.—EDITOR.

and have gathered grandchildren around my hearth; but the gay and festal life of the Normandy of my youth seems, to my old eyes, to be well-nigh a thing of the past. I must say a word about a journey I made in these years which brought the memories of Offaly vividly before my mind. I had met a Knight of the Golden Fleece at the château of Villars; he was a Spanish grandee, and had heard my name. I soon afterwards received a letter from a noble in Spain, which announced that he was a scion of our house, and invited me to his home in the distant lands of Granada. He was descended from one of our princes, who, I have said, served in the great Armada of Philip II. His family had been made Condés de Ofelia in the Spanish Peerage;[1] he had fought in the Spanish army under Berwick and Vendôme. We visited Almanza and other scenes of the great Spanish war; I was indignant when I heard how a French army, during the ill-starred alliance of England and France, had crossed the frontier and taken part with an English fleet in destroying a squadron of Spanish warships. I was much struck with the landscape of Spain, unlike anything I had beheld before: the lofty sierras and the tablelands of the Castiles contrasted markedly with the Andalusian plains. The Escurial, too, rising in gloomy grandeur from a waste, was a curious spectacle to a stranger's eye; and I admired the magnificent port of Cadiz, the greatest arsenal of the Spanish navy and the haven of the treasure-ships from the Indies. I saw, however, with bitter regret, the flag of the Saxon waving from the heights of Gibraltar; he was in possession of the Mediterranean gate, the portal to the great commerce of the East.

[1] My kinsman's account is accurate. The head of this branch of the O'Connors of Offaly was Captain-General of Granada in 1770.—EDITOR.

The cities and towns of the kingdom had much to attract attention; Madrid was becoming French under a French dynasty, but the Gothic architecture of the towns of the north was the very opposite of the architecture of the towns of the south—Moorish creations, here and there rich with noble Roman remains. The Spaniards seemed to me a very fine people; but, though the country had made distinct progress, it was still centuries behind France, and the signs of the decrepitude of the past were but too apparent. I rejoiced to find several men of our land in high place in the monarchy; I gazed with emotion at the spot where Hugh O'Neill sleeps in the holy crypts of the Cathedral of Seville.

In spite of Fleury and his policy of peace, Europe was more or less stirred by war from 1733 onwards, I shall not dwell on conflicts in which I took no part. but I shall glance at the last campaign of my illustrious chief. The war of the Polish Succession witnessed the death of the renowned Berwick; it beheld the French and Muscovite soldiers fight on the Vistula; it exhibited the weakness of the Councils of Versailles; and yet it will ultimately make Lorraine a province of France. I pass from these events to notice the vicissitudes of the war in Italy, in which Villars had the supreme command of an army of Louis XV. Mainly owing to the energy of the Queen of Spain, the second consort of Philip V., a princess of the great House of Parma, a League was formed in 1733 to drive Austria and the empire out of Italy; Charles Emmanuel, a son of the old Duke of Savoy, was one of the allies; Fleury brought France into the alliance almost against his will. I heard all that related to the great marshal from one of the companions-in-arms who never left his side. Villars had been made Marshal-General of the Armies of the King, an honour conferred on

Turenne near the close of his career. Though he had passed his eightieth year he had his wonted ardour; he pledged himself to his master on quitting Versailles that he would lay Italy a prize at his feet. The veteran would probably have fulfilled his promise but for untoward accidents, which, as had happened before, marred and thwarted his genius in his splendid career. He reached Milan in the first days of November; he found a French, a Spanish and a Piedmontese force, from 50,000 to 60,000 strong, assembled in Lombardy and ready to march. The Emperor had been taken by surprise; he had not 20,000 men in Italy. Villars insisted on seizing the course of the Adige, and, having taken possession of that great line of defence, to strike the enemy down as he issued from the Tyrol.[1] But Charles Emmanuel commanded the forces of the League in chief; he wasted invaluable months in idle sieges; the Spanish generals, obeying the orders of their queen, had ere long left the main army and moved against Naples. Meanwhile the Austrians had descended along the Adige into Lombardy. Villars entreated his superior to attack them upon the Oglio; but time was lost, the opportunity passed away. The veteran hero, indignant at the treatment he had received, requested permission to return to France, but he fell ill on his way and met a sudden death at Turin. His last exploit in the field recalls the feats of arms of his early youth; he had cut his way, with a handful of horsemen, through an enemy's detachment threefold in numbers. He was the last of the great generals of Louis XIV., a succession of glory from the days of Condé and Turenne.

I must write a few words on another contest which,

[1] This project of Villars's prefigured Napoleon's march to the Adige in 1796, as his project to descend on Vienna in 1703 prefigured Napoleon's marches on Vienna in 1805 and 1809.—EDITOR.

though approaching its close, has not quite ended. The war of the Austrian Succession, if less momentous, has extended over even further limits than the great war of the Succession of Spain; it has shaken Europe and the uncivilised world. It brought England and France into conflict in the far seas of Canada and in the unknown regions of the vast empire of the Moguls. It sent a handful of Scottish mountaineers within a few marches of London, and placed the Low Countries at the mercy of a French army. It threatened with ruin the Imperial House of Hapsburg, and yet beheld the Pandour, the Croat, and the armed swarms of the East encamped on the Rhine and overrunning Lorraine. It saw our armies within easy march of Vienna, and yet driven back in ignominious retreat; it showed how weak may be a coalition when badly directed. It has placed two great personages on the stage of events — Maria Theresa, the young empress queen, and Frederick, the ruler of the new Prussian Monarchy; and what I trust Frenchmen will lay to heart—it has illustrated the astonishing power of the Prussian army trained by a veteran who learned war from Marlborough. Extraordinary, however, as were these events and manifold and rapid these immense changes, the ultimate results may perhaps not be great, but they ought to make France look after her navy; her seaport towns have revived and she has fine colonies, but they exist at the will of the mighty fleets of England.

I shall only refer to two passages of this war—my sons took an honourable part in them; they bear fresh testimony to the martial qualities of our race. In June 1743, George II., the Hanoverian King of England—he had fought bravely on the field of Oudenarde—had advanced along the northern bank of the Maine, in Germany, with an army perhaps 50,000 strong; he was encamped at Aschaffen-

burg, not far from the city of Frankfort. A French army, superior in numbers, under Marshal Noailles, held the southern bank; the king was pent in between a range of hills; his troops were unable to obtain supplies; the only course open to him was to retreat on Hanau. But Noailles had his dispositions admirably made; he had placed batteries along the course of the river, and had arrayed a large body of men at Dettingen, covered by a ravine and other obstacles, in order to arrest the enemy on his march, while he had arrayed another large detachment to close on his rear. King George and his army seemed caught in a trap; a most untoward accident enabled them to escape. The fire of our batteries ravaged the hostile masses as they made their way slowly to the decisive point; they must have been stopped and stricken down at Dettingen had not a lieutenant of Noailles, a parade officer, most recklessly abandoned his position of vantage, and crossing the ravine had fallen on the advancing enemy. The attack was made in disorder and with inferior numbers; our troops for the most part were rude levies; the English and Germans cut their way through, and even beat the assailants back. But Lord Clare's regiments fought with heroic valour: "Curse on the laws which deprive me of such subjects," King George, it is known, exclaimed in the thickest of the fight.[1]

The other passage of arms is the famous battle, even now ringing throughout Europe, which has shed undying glory on the Irish name. Marshal Saxe, a German, but an able commander in the field, was laying siege to Tournay in May 1745 at the head of a French army of about 70,000 men. The Duke of Cumberland, a son of King George II., marched to the relief of the fortress with a somewhat lesser

[1] An elaborate account of the battle of Dettingen will be found in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, III., pp. 668-679.—EDITOR.

force; Saxe, leaving detachments to continue the siege, took a formidable position close to the Scheldt and made ready to offer his enemy battle. His right wing rested on the Scheldt and the village of Antoine, his centre held the little town of Fontenoy; his left wing occupied the wood of Barry; his whole line was covered by strong redoubts and batteries. Cumberland attacked in the early morning of the 11th of May; his forces and those of Saxe were perhaps in numbers equal; the Dutch on his left and the English on his right made repeated efforts to turn and drive in our wings, but they were unable to make any impression on them; they were overwhelmed by a fire like that of Malplaquet. After a bloody struggle of four or five hours the duke massed together an enormous column, composed for the most part of English footmen, and said to have been 16,000 strong; he launched it against our army's centre, between Fontenoy and the wood of Barry; this was a daring if a somewhat reckless stroke for victory. For a time the mighty onset was impossible to resist; the batteries at Fontenoy and the wood smote the assailants in vain with their deadly cross fire; the English infantry—I cannot refuse them justice—pressed steadily forward, strewing the ground with their dying and their dead. The first troops the column encountered were the Foot Guards of the king; they were shattered to pieces by a murderous volley and driven away in disorderly flight. More than one of our regiments met a similar fate. The charges of our cavalry proved completely fruitless. The column ere long was in the very centre of our line; it kept every enemy away by its fierce and constant fire. A thrill of alarm ran through our army; there were whispers of retreat or even worse; the king, who was on the field, turned his charger's rein. But the column was

disordered by the success it had won; it was unprotected by horsemen and guns; it could not deploy or keep its formation; time was needed to prepare it for a final onslaught. Saxe seized the occasion with admirable skill; fresh batteries were hurried up and smote the head of the still victorius column; our reserves, to a man, were launched boldly against it; it was attacked furiously in front and in both flanks. The mighty mass, deprived of the support it ought to have had and hemmed in by enemies on every side, began at last to waver and then gave way; it weltered in wild and hopeless confusion; it was driven in shattered fragments from the field, and disappeared, it has been said, in appalling rout. The mortal stroke was struck by the men of Lord Clare and of Dillon, some 4000 warriors of the Brigade; they fell desperately on their Saxon oppressors; they glutted their just revenge on this memorable day. Fontenoy will for ages be a shining light in the dark annals of our noble if unfortunate race.[1]

[1] There are many good accounts of the battle of Fontenoy. Voltaire is brilliant, but does not do the Irish justice; Despagnac, II., 106, is more impartial. A good description will be found in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, IV., pp. 112-124. The admirable ballad of T. Davis is well known.—EDITOR.

## CHAPTER XII

IN 1725 I resolved to see again the land of my birth. My brother had made a large fortune at the Bar of England, as it is called; he had put his savings into lands and houses in a town of the name of Tunbridge Wells, a place of resort for the high life of London; had sold these to regain the fragment of our domains in Offaly, which Maurice Stack, I have said, held in trust for him; and had bought besides a considerable estate in Roscommon, a tract of the province of Connaught beyond the Shannon.[1] Though he had gone over, too, to the heretic Church, he had still a true reverence for the Church of his fathers. He had married a daughter of the great Catholic House of Fingall,[2] one of the noblest of the old Englishry of the Pale; he had now been established some months in Ireland. We could not refuse his invitation on this occasion; Estelle and I took ship in a trader of Havre, and, after a passage of five or six days, were landed at a place called Ring's End, near Dublin. I could have wished to behold the world of London, and especially to have a look at Blenheim, the palace

[1] My kinsman's statements of these transactions are correct; I have family papers relating to them. The estate in Roscommon illustrates the changes that have taken place in the value of land in Ireland. It was bought by Maurice O'Connor, my great-great-grandfather, for £7600, sold by my mother and her sisters for £66,000, and re-sold, about 1874, for £90,000. It is now worth perhaps £50,000.—EDITOR.

[2] My great-great-grandfather married Mary, third daughter of Peter, fourth Earl of Fingall and Baron of Killeen, by writ of summons in 1403.—EDITOR.

of the renowned Marlborough; but though France and England were at profound peace, I feared that an old Irish soldier of the great king would run no little risk should he be found in England. Maurice met us at the little quay of Ring's End, a collection of poor dwellings on a dreary marsh beside the Liffey—it had scarcely a sail on its waters. We passed a few days in Dublin on our way to Offaly. I had not seen the city for more than thirty years, indeed since I had entered it after the Boyne; to an eye that had dwelt on the capital of France, it had an inanimate, nay, a squalid aspect. The public buildings were few and mean, the churches, especially, were unsightly; the seat of the Government, the Castle, was a kind of half house, half fortress; the Courts of Justice were held in a miserable lane; the Parliament had its abode in an hospital. Some streets of the better kind had been built, and were occupied by the Protestant caste of citizens, who lorded it over the down-trodden Catholics, in this as in every town in Ireland; the signs of this ascendency, as its name was, were visible in a statue on horseback of William III., and in other statues of men of the conquering race, raised in one or two great open places and thoroughfares. But the main part of the city was an assemblage of narrow alleys and lanes, the home of the population of the conquered race, huddled together in wretched dwellings and cabins of mud; nothing like it could be seen in the worst nooks of Paris. The lord lieutenant and a train of gilded coaches occasionally went through the principal streets, attended by English soldiers and a staff of English officers; the Protestant corporation celebrated the days of the Boyne and Aghrim by a display of flags and of other trophies that told of their triumph. The presence of foreign rule and of the domination of sect and widespread and appalling

poverty were the distinctive and characteristic features of Dublin.

A journey of rather more than two days through a poor country, having scarcely an inn, brought us to my old home, in the land of Offaly. Our home, beside our ruined castle, had disappeared; my brother had built a new house at the end of an avenue between two lines of trees and surrounded by a trim and well laid out garden, after the fashion of the French taste that generally prevailed. He had changed the Irish name "Gartnamona," the "garden in the bog," into the modern English name "Mount Pleasant," taken from a hill at Tunbridge Wells, which had been, in part, his own; this grated on my ears, I freely acknowledge; but changes of this kind were frequent in those days; they were supposed to encourage "the English and Protestant interest."[1] The features of the landscape were the same as when I was a boy; the Slieve Blooms rose at a distance from a tract of bog; low hills and uplands spread out from swampy morasses; you still saw the remains of the primæval Celtic woodlands. I made my way over the adjoining region; I was surprised how little it had improved in nearly forty years; its aspect was still unsettled and sad. In places a few petty towns had been built; they were divided into the "English town" of the Protestant upper class, ugly slated structures in narrow and dirty streets, and the "Irish town" of the conquered Catholic people, rows of thatched huts, scarcely fit for human beings to live in. Here and there the eye rested on mean and low dwellings in the midst of plantations of stunted trees; these were the abodes of the descendants of

[1] All this is accurate. The avenue of my great-great-grandfather and a fragment of the house he built remain. I changed back in my own time the name of "Mount Pleasant" into the ancient Irish name, "Gartnamona."—EDITOR.

the Saxon settlers, and were dignified by the names of "mansions and demesnes," very different from the châteaux of our Norman seigneurs. The land generally spread out, as of old, in pasturage, the ill-fenced and ill-divided domain of rude herds of cattle and flocks of ill-fed sheep; good and fruitful agriculture was seldom seen, farms of the better class were exceedingly few. The population of our race was collected in wretched villages or was scattered in mud cabins such as I had beheld in the capital; they had little plots of potatoes around their dwellings, and eked existence out on a perishable root, the food of swine and barn-door fowl in France. I was astonished at seeing so few traces of the colonists of the times of Mary Tudor and Cromwell, whose sons were numerous enough in my boyhood; I heard that, for the most part, they had left the country, or had sunk into the mass of the Irishry in their midst. The ancient owners of the land, the children of the chiefs and of the Norman *noblesse*, were not to be found, save in a very few instances; they had continued for a long series of years to seek their fortunes in far-distant lands, and had many honoured names, not only in the armies of France, but in the armies of Austria, of Spain, and even of Russia. For the rest, the land, as in the past, was a land of ruins; the abbeys and the castles of a better age lay in desolation, as they had been left by the ruthless hand of conquest.

The settlement of conquest and confiscation, which I had beheld in youth, had been to a certain extent changed; but such as it was, the change had been a change for the worse. The land was nearly all in the ownership of the descendants of the English colonists, in blood Saxons, in faith Protestants; but many of these, I have said, had disappeared. Some had parted with their estates to a class known as

middlemen; these men held their lands, at low rents, to absentee superiors, who lived in England or elsewhere, and never saw Ireland: they were the oppressive tyrants of Catholic peasant serfs. The alien lords of the soil had representatives in the Colonial Parliament which sat in Dublin, and was supposed to rule Ireland; they had a monopoly of what was called county government, administered the justice that might have been expected from them, and taxed the Catholic occupiers of their estates well-nigh as they pleased. Yet this order of men, embodying as they did the Protestant ascendency which prevailed everywhere, were as a rule by no means prosperous; their Parliament was a mere tool of English ministers; they were governed by Englishmen supreme at the Castle; a series of laws ruinous to Irish agriculture and commerce had made them far from contented and comparatively poor. They were made to kneel to England on the necks of the vanquished race in their midst; they were tyrants and mere dependents alike, and, as was certain to happen in a state of social life like this, they were given to extravagance, debauchery and low vices, while they still professed the Puritan cant of their fathers. Beside and below this class of owners of the land were placed other classes that also upheld the Protestant ascendency, which law and government had tried to make completely dominant and secure. A number of large farmers of the conquering race were still to be found; they held the best lands and always were favoured tenants. German and French Protestants had been encouraged to settle among them, in order to add strength to the Protestant interest. The towns, too, such as they were, were ruled by little bodies of men of the faith that was held in honour; these domineered over their Catholic fellows. This was

notably seen in the case of the trading towns along the coast, which had some commerce with England and other countries. Yet all these classes were not thriving or even numerous; they seemed blighted by the privileges which were their boast, and they showed a marked tendency to "become," as the phrase was, "Papists," and to merge into the Catholic population around. The memories of the Boyne and of Aghrim were still recent; and the men of the "Protestant settlement," as it was called—landlords, middlemen, traders, cultivators of the soil—had the manner and bearing of a conquering caste, and despised the native conquered race of the land, with which, nevertheless, they in many ways blended.

The Protestant ascendency that hung over the land was, as may be supposed, all-powerful in the heretic Church. The English conquerors had placed this long before in possession of all that had belonged to our true Church. It had an array of bishops and superior clergy for its scanty congregations spread over the country; but it had no hold on the mass of the people, and thousands of its communion had become Catholics. In many of its edifices no flock was to be seen; it had been robbed by the lords of the soil of its own faith, and, strange to say, its dignitaries were at continual feud with the Presbyterian sects who had settled in Ulster. As for the conquered Catholic Irish people, the policy of a succession of rulers had been to keep it in abject and complete subjection. The Treaty of Limerick, I have said, had been shamefully broken. Catholics had not only been cheated out of their estates by hundreds; they had universally been deprived, which was far worse, of the rights and privileges which had been guaranteed to them. The Colonial Parliament, with the full consent of the men in power in England, made a series of laws which

placed the Irish Catholic in a position of permanent and degrading bondage, in some respects worse than when he was under the iron rule of Cromwell. The Irish Catholic was forbidden to buy land, or even to have an encumbrance on it; he could not acquire a house or an acre in his own country. The Catholic who happened still to be an owner of land was subjected to a kind of social torture; his estate was made so to descend that it crumbled away; his family was barbarously tempted to become his foe; law watched at his hearth to make him wretched. As for the Catholic occupiers of the soil, the great mass of the peasantry, they could not obtain a durable tenure of a farm; they were kept down as mere tenants at will, as a rule, and were often vexed and harassed by excessive rents and other burdens. The Catholic community of all classes was prohibited from rising in most walks of life; they were shut out from nearly all professions and callings; in some towns they could not even appear as traders. These laws, in a word, were passed to make the Irish Catholic a slave, to brutalise him, and to debase his being; in many of the relations of life he was a mere outcast; he was indeed usually described, at the Castle and in the Colonial Parliament, as the "Papist, the dangerous and the common enemy." And as it was with our people, so it was with their Church. Our priesthood were not slain or banished, as in the days of Cromwell; but they were persecuted in a variety of ways: they were compelled to give an account of themselves to the Government, and their hierarchy was not permitted to set foot in Ireland.

What I have just written refers to the general state of my country, as I gathered it from many persons I met; but it was fully borne out by what I saw in Offaly. English writers have urged that the barbarous laws, known by the name of the Penal

Code of Ireland, which humiliated and crushed down our Catholic people, were borrowed from laws made against the Huguenots of France, and that they were a kind of retribution for the tyranny of Louis XIV. The treatment of the Huguenots was in some respects even more cruel than the treatment of the Irish Catholics; but there is no resemblance between cases completely unlike. The Huguenots were rebels to their lawful king, and were a mere fraction of the great French people. The Irish Catholics were always loyal to their Stuart sovereigns, and formed the great body of a nation that had a place in history. What was done to a mere sect, if severe, was in part, at least, deserved; what was done to our whole race was inexcusable and infamous wrong; it is mere hypocrisy to make a thoroughly false comparison. The effects of the Penal Code were such as might be expected to follow unmitigated oppression carried out in the name of religion. The few Catholic owners of land who remained at home obscurely vegetated on their estates, and ceased to be the national leaders and guides of their people. The great mass of our race, excluded from the pursuits of industry, and unable to better itself in the affairs of life, sank back on the land in abject thraldom, and formed a poor and down-trodden peasantry, repeatedly on the very brink of starvation. They were, in a word, the mere serfs of the alien lords of the soil. There was one special mark of degradation in their lot. Virtuous as their women naturally were, they too often yielded to the lusts of their masters. But though Protestant ascendency and the subjugation of our race seemed assured, and the power of Government was put in full force for the purpose, this settlement of society was still unstable; it had not the appearance of a permanent structure. Ireland, at the side of the richest

country in Europe, was a miserable and discontented land; her condition and that of England was a terrible contrast. The Protestant ruling class, I have said, was not doing well, and had many and real causes of complaint; the Protestant classes beneath it were weak, diminishing, and not prosperous. And the Irish Catholic people, conquered as it was, and kept down in servitude that seemed hopeless, had not forgotten the memories of the past, and had not accepted the order of things to which it had been subjected. The peasantry were little better than slaves, and held their plots of land at the beck of their lords; but they remembered the tribal rights they had lost, and the possessions of their fathers in happier times. They still treasured the names of the chiefs they loved and revered. The ashes of dangerous fires burned beneath a state of things comparatively undisturbed on the surface; they occasionally broke out in wild deeds of revenge, and in gatherings of angry and savage mobs; their existence might be generally traced in the sullenness and the looks of mingled hatred and fear, which were characteristic of the greater part of our people. As for our priesthood, persecuted and jealously watched as they were, they did the offices of Holy Church sometimes in miserable hovels and sometimes in the open air; but they kept the Lamp of Life shining amidst the darkness around; and they not only saved our race from sinking into the depths of savage human nature, but converted thousands of Protestant heretics to the true faith.

When I was in Offaly at this time instances of the direct working of the Penal Code passed before my eyes. The trade of the discoverer and the informer —I have said what it was—had not ceased, and was even increasing. A vile harpy, who made his bread by a detestable law, hauled a Catholic gentleman

before the courts in Dublin for refusing to hand his estate over to a profligate son, who had become a Protestant apostate for this very purpose. The marriage of a Catholic lady had been annulled, her fair fame sullied, her children made bastards, because it had not taken place in a heretic place of worship; her husband, a zealous Protestant, made another woman his wife. A kinsman of my sister-in-law, Lady Mary O'Connor, was offered £5 for a horse he was riding—an animal worth at least £100—by a Protestant squireen, as the class was called. Being a Catholic, he had no right to resist the demand; he gave the insolent fellow a good thrashing, because he would not accept a "mere Papist's" challenge. Another Catholic gentleman of high degree was forced down on his knees in a public street by a pack of young Protestant swaggerers after a Grand Jury dinner, as it was named. He was made to swear an oath to the memory of William III., "Our deliverer from Papists, their priests and base money." He could obtain no redress from a Protestant magistrate. I saw a lawyer at the Assizes—courts held twice a year in Offaly and the other Irish counties—refuse to plead the cause of a Catholic tenant, because the Protestant landlord frowned him down; the judge, an Englishman, made no kind of objection. This was holding the scales of justice in an even balance. I was told of what was known as a "priest hunt" in our neighbourhood. A Catholic clergyman, whose name was not on the books of the Government, was tracked by spies, and pursued by soldiers and hounds; when caught in a bog, where he had taken refuge, he was thrown with the worst malefactors into a common prison. A young Protestant middleman, in need of money, carried off a Catholic heiress, and, aided by a body of boon companions, compelled her to marry him or to fare

worse. This was a common device of this order of men, all, with scarcely an exception, of the dominant faith. The unfortunate woman had to bear her fate in silence. Several great Protestant houses had rude harems attached to them. Catholic girls lived a life of shame in these; little was said of what was of frequent occurrence. As to the ordinary relations between the upper and lower classes, the growing crops of the Catholic tenant was repeatedly swept away to pay excessive tithe or rent, and all kinds of exactions were wrung from him. In towns, too, I have heard, there were different weights and measures for the Protestant and the Catholic buyer and seller.

My brother, however, was perhaps the most striking instance of the state of society in which he had cast his lot. He professed, at least outwardly, the heretic creed; he had bound himself up with the "Protestant interest," had even planted English tenants on farms which by an accident had been left empty.[1] He was known too to belong to a princely Irish house; his wife was a daughter of one of the most ancient of the Norman *noblesse.* Yet he was looked upon with dislike in which jealousy had part, by the upstart lords of the soil around him; he was never made a magistrate, or had a share in county government; he had no seat in the body called a Grand Jury that dealt with local affairs. Two examples of this antipathy I witnessed myself. He wished to restore the tomb of the O'Connors at Killeigh; but difficulties were placed in his way by a heretic parson—the founders of the abbey were a proscribed race. He tried to obtain a lease of a small part of our forfeited lands; but he was told this was out of the question, "he might set up a title to the

[1] Some of these families still remain. They have, with scarcely an exception, become Catholics.—EDITOR.

fee."[1] For the rest he was but a descendant of half barbarous chiefs—like Red Indians among American settlers—his wife after all was a mere "titled Papist"—though she would have had a place of honour at St James's and Versailles. But the feelings of the sons of Cromwellian traders and soldiers were very different from those of the peasantry around him for miles. Down-trodden as they were, and afraid of their masters, they held him in the reverence they thought his birthright; for them he was the heir of their time-honoured princes, the true possessor of the domains torn away by the Saxon. Some brought to him the gifts, which in other days their fathers had brought to his own; they often appealed to him to arrange their disputes, or to do something to mitigate their wrongs; the notes of the old harper were heard in his house; even one or two descendants of the forgotten Brehons let him know who they were. For myself, when I considered the order of things which Protestant ascendency and Catholic subjection had produced, when I observed how unnatural and false it was, and how the past still lived beneath a mere film of the present, the shallow growth of what was evil and unjust, I could not believe that it would prove lasting. I sometimes opened my mind to my brother: "These serfs," I used to say, "have not forgotten what we and they were; they have long memories kept fresh by oppression; they will yet find leaders, and the dry bones will stir into life; crushed down as they now are, they will rise again as in 1641-89. I foresee rebellions and troubles in what I behold around; God and nature do not preserve what is turned upside down. And are you assured that the state of things of which you have become a part will endure? You have made yourself one of the

[1] These two incidents happened.—EDITOR.

'Protestant interest'; the men of your class — and yet you are not of them—are given a free hand to do as they please with the Catholic people. But they are not prospering, and they are mere hangers-on of England; will England maintain them in their authority, nay, even in their lands? Bear in mind what Father Nicholas often told us when boys; 'the English break the instruments they employ in Ireland—where are now the *noblesse* of the Pale, nay, thousands of the later brood of colonists?' The time may come when England will upset the 'Protestant settlement,' and cast adrift the existing owners of the soil, as they exterminated the Desmonds and other great houses of her blood."[1]

I was in Offaly for more than six months, and made journeys through different parts of Ireland. I gazed with emotion on scenes of the war, in which our country had unfortunately gone down; but if we had lost all, we had not lost honour. The siege of Derry was celebrated, rightly enough, by the sons of the brave defenders; two flags that had belonged to our army were in the cathedral; the old guns were ranged along the invincible ramparts. It was otherwise with the siege of Limerick: the Protestant corporation had rejoicings on the day of the fall of the city, but there was no record of the great deeds of our race; the Treaty Stone alone bore witness to the shame of the conquerors. Aged men still remembered the Boyne and Aghrim, but there was little to see on those memorable fields; the dead slept unhonoured beneath the turf of their graves. Cork was certainly showing signs of improvement; the city was spreading out from the marshes of the

[1] The student of Irish history, and notably of Irish agrarian legislation, during the last twenty years, will acknowledge that my kinsman's forecast is correct. I, for one, do not think that two wrongs make a right; and confiscation in the past cannot be morally redressed by spoliation in the present.—EDITOR.

Lee; fettered as all traders were by bad English laws, it had commerce with the American plantations and with the great port of Bristol. I went, of course, to Tralee to see my sisters; they were dead to the world and lived only for God; but when they fell on my neck I felt bitter grief that the princesses of our house had had a lot such as this. I travelled over a large part of Kerry, and beheld scenes of which I had heard much in France. This land is a great region of mountains and glens, through which arms of the sea run up for leagues; it had sent recruits by hundreds to the Brigade; the wild geese, as they were pathetically called, had flown in thick flights to the standards of France; and the selfish greed of the Saxon had perhaps doubled the exiles' numbers. English law had forbidden the export of our wool from Ireland; it has been smuggled to France in immense quantities; the Kerry youths who join our army take ship in the small vessels, which maintain this traffic, from many a French seaport. The Brigade is now, perhaps, 15,000 strong; I have said what it was at Dettingen and Fontenoy; may England long continue to add to her enemies! Not the least interesting of these experiences was a visit made by Estelle and myself to Portarlington, the village which, I have said, had been made the seat of a little French colony. My former prisoner, my wife's kinsman, M. de Bacquancourt, or, as he called himself, Des Vœux, was dead; but several Huguenot families had gathered together in the place. It was, in fact, a Huguenot settlement in our Catholic land; the Calvinist prayers were read in French in a small church, the market-place and the street were those of a French village, the men and women of the better class were French, the farmers around had nearly all French names. Estelle and I were hospitably received; in several houses we saw relics of the

war of 1689-91; old swords and pistols that had done service at the Boyne, pikes and muskets that had been used at Aghrim.[1]

On our return to our Norman home, my brother showed us Dublin again, and made us acquainted with several people he knew. He introduced us to a kinsman, one of my grandmother's family, a scion of the Malowen O'Connors; he had just put on the gown of an Irish lawyer, and has since risen to a high place in his calling. His name is Anthony Malone; he was then quite young; he had been brought up at great English places of learning; like Maurice, he had gone over to the heretic Church, for otherwise he could have no place at the Bar of Ireland, as it is named; but he was a Catholic at heart, and had strong Catholic sympathies. He had a fine presence and a graceful and attractive manner; he reminded me of some of the distinguished advocates I had beheld pleading in the Palais de Justice in Rouen. He took us to see the meeting of the Colonial Parliament; it had its session, I have said, in an hospital—a large but ill-designed and paltry dwelling; we heard the Lord Lieutenant Carteret—then a young man, but afterwards a bitter enemy of the pacific Walpole—he egged on a war between England and France—pronounce what is known as an address from the throne. It was full of references to local affairs I did not understand, but it dwelt on the "necessity of making fresh laws against Papists"; this sentiment caused a loud hum of approbation to arise. The Parliament sate in two large rooms. The Lords, for the most part descendants of the conquering settlers, sate in their

[1] Portarlington, half a century ago, still bore many traces of the French colony. A few people still living may remember when the Huguenot service was conducted in French. Not many of the French families remain now; the Huguenot farmers soon became Catholic.—EDITOR.

robes of state, but had little of the look of a *noblesse;* the Commons, nearly all of the same origin, wore what were called Court dresses and swords, and were very different from the men I had seen at the gatherings at Versailles. All, it is needless to say, were of the ruling "Protestant interest"; their bearing to Carteret combined an assumption of independence and dull and coarse servility. We visited too, with Anthony, the Courts, as they were called, of Justice; they were held, I have said, in a wretched lane, surrounded by lanes of the same kind, under the shadow, as it were, of the supreme Castle. My kinsman pointed the judges out; they were, with hardly an exception, Englishmen, brought over from Westminster, in London, to administer Irish law: one, Chief Justice Whitshed, a vulgar, ill-featured man, seemed to be in exceedingly bad temper; he had been savagely lampooned by the famous Dr Swift. I saw, also, several of the leaders of the Irish Bar; the judges and lawyers were, of course, all Protestants; they bore themselves as if they were mere tools of the Government, to which allusions were occasionally slavishly made. One incident made a deep impression on my mind: a suit had been brought into one of the Courts, called the Chancery. A Protestant lord of the soil, who held a Catholic estate on a secret trust for a Catholic owner, had infamously broken faith, and was trying to rob his friend of his lands, and to make them his own. The law permitted this atrocious fraud; I shall never forget the words of Midleton, the Lord Chancellor: "The Court cannot presume that a Papist exists in Ireland."[1]

[1] This was the law in Ireland at this period, but it was ere long ended. Many Catholic estates were held in these secret trusts; it is to the honour of the Irish Protestant gentry that they were hardly ever violated.—EDITOR.

We made the acquaintance of the celebrated Dr Swift at this time; my brother, I have said, had known him well in London. We met him in a street, followed by a thronging mob shouting out "The Drapier" and "Wood's halfpence"; even the best citizens took their hats off to him. He made his way roughly to his home, and begged us to come in. Swift was a poor minister of the heretic Irish Church, who had risen by his fine parts and his art in pleasing great men. He had been employed by Harley and St John in writing what are called pamphlets, during the great Tory movement, in the last years of Queen Anne; he had hit off the foibles of Marlborough with admirable skill, and indeed had done something to cause the renowned general's fall. He was an author of several ingenious works; one was full of blasphemy against every form of the Christian faith; the queen would not appoint him one of her bishops, and he was sent to Ireland in a kind of banishment. He became dean of the Cathedral of St Patrick's in Dublin, long changed from a Catholic to a Protestant place of worship; and he had been a conspicuous figure for some years in the Irish capital. A short time before he had denounced, with great force and wit, in a series of letters signed "The Drapier," an attempt made by the men in power in England to multiply and debase the Irish coinage—a subject not forgotten since the days of King James—by giving a jobbing patent to a man called Wood. He was now at the height of a popularity never attained before; this was the reason of the scene we had witnessed. Swift was a man of a heavy figure, but with a fine countenance; his keen eye seemed to pierce you through; there was something commanding in his appearance. He talked a great deal, and had all the talk to himself; we were, in truth, rather in awe of him; his conversa-

tion was homely, sometimes coarse, but full of strong sense, and pithy. He laid himself out in finding fault with everything that was done and seen in Ireland; he dwelt on this with sarcastic and indignant bitterness. No Catholic could wish to hear worse of the heretic Church in Ireland; its bishops and priests were ignorant, selfish, worthless; it was a voice crying in the wilderness, to no purpose; it was certain to fall, and its fall would be a good riddance. The men of the Parliament had a country to sell and sold it; they were bidders at the Castle, which disposed of the rights of their country. The owners of the land were bloodsucking harpies; they plundered their church and plundered their tenants; their wives and daughters were slatterns tricked out in tawdry English finery, who could not wear anything that was made in Ireland. The clergy of our people were mere tools of the Pope and the devil, despised, superstitious, yet dangerous drones; but the Presbyterian ministers were far worse; they were the spawn of rebellion and fanatical folly. As for our Irish race, they ought to have driven the Englishry into the sea. Were they not always fighting with each other like cats and dogs? They were now little better than the swine in the fields. My brother ought not to have left England and taken up his abode in a miserable land; his princely lineage was fabulous drivel; he would be done out of his estate, for he was a sham Protestant. But the fiercest and hardest of this railing was that directed against the ministers in England and the men at the Castle. They tied and bound Irishmen in chains, but not for their own sins; they denied them, Protestants and all, the simplest rights of freemen. But their gross ignorance of Ireland was their most mischievous fault; they sometimes gave us measures they meant to do good; but they were like doctors who send physic from a

distance, not knowing the constitution of the patient or the nature of the disease. My gentle Estelle was terrified at the savage and harsh language; yet Swift, I have heard, had fascinated and subdued more than one woman. This remarkable man died, many years afterwards, mad. I cannot say that I felt surprised; a kind of insane rancour seemed preying on his mind.

We visited Ireland again in 1740. War, it was felt, between England and France was at hand; I wished to behold once more the land of my birth. Like myself, my brother was now an aged man; my sisters had died in their religious house in Kerry; our name in Offaly was passing away. I travelled through different parts of the country; but for a frightful calamity of which I shall say a word, signs of improvement appeared at least on the surface. The Protestant parts of Dublin were growing out on all sides; streets bearing the names usually of English lord-lieutenants were spreading; the Colonial Parliament held its session in a noble edifice near Trinity College, a seminary for the sons of the Protestant upper classes. Cork, too, was continuing to make a kind of progress; Belfast, a petty village in the time of William III., had become a considerable town and a prosperous seaport, the centre of an increasing manufacture of linen. The land on the whole had a more settled aspect than it had had fifteen years before, the ravages of war and conquest were less apparent; the order of things around seemed somewhat less ominous. The houses of the Protestant lords of the soil were better than they had been; lands were becoming, to some extent, enclosed and planted; agriculture was not as backward as of old; roads were being opened, and they quickened industry and trade. Time, too, had thrown kindly growths over a settlement of the sword; the

men who had fought in 1689-91 had nearly all passed away; the feelings of the conquering and the conquered race had in some measure softened. The owners of the land lived more on their estates than had been the case; their Catholic serfs were beginning to regard them as rather better than mere alien masters. A kind of independence, too, had shown itself in the Colonial Parliament; it was no longer a mere Castle plaything; it had what was called an "Irish interest" within its precincts, opposed to the "English interest," which had been all-powerful. Anthony Malone—I rejoiced to see him again—had a seat in the assembly at this time; though a "Popish convert," he was fast making his way; he was perhaps the best orator in the ranks of the "Irish interest"; he will certainly rise to high eminence. He was now, too, a leader of the Irish Bar; he was rapidly making a large fortune, for litigation in the courts was great, arising out of the forfeitures of the past. He already was a trustee of several Catholic estates; he was a recognised champion of Catholic rights.' I was pleased to learn from him that the horrible Penal Code, especially in all that related to the land, was being relaxed in a variety of ways; a new generation of judges had grown up, and encouraged evasions of the law by dexterous fictions; the vile trade of the discoverer and the informer had ceased; secret trusts of Catholic lands were respected. The state of society, nevertheless, evolved by the domination of race and faith, had not been essentially

[1] My kinsman's prediction as to Anthony Malone has proved accurate. This distinguished man became Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, led the patriotic Opposition, which grew up by degrees in the Irish Parliament, and, in fact, formed a connecting link between Swift and Grattan. Grattan has written that in eloquence he was not inferior to the first Pitt and to Mansfield. He held a number of Catholic estates in trust, and was universally honoured and respected. I feel proud of being one of his not very remote kinsmen.—EDITOR.

changed; its sinister features were yet conspicuous. The institutions, the Government, the life of Ireland, were modelled on the type of Protestant ascendency; and the subjugation of a Catholic people, a thin film only covered the innumerable resulting evils. A striking instance of this had been witnessed of late; a system for the education of the young had been set on foot, and had received the countenance of hundreds in high places, which sought to bribe "the children of Papists" to become Protestants, and simply placed Mammon on a loftier level than God.

Ireland, however, was not easy to observe at this time; the land was under the shadow of a most dire calamity. Famines had been of not uncommon occurrence; there had been at least three since the reign of William III.; dearth was general in the summer of every year. Dr Swift, indeed, had, with cruel irony, put forward a ghastly scheme for killing the young and living on them in order to get rid of a population in continual want. I shall only refer to one of his phrases: "The landlords, who had devoured the parents, had the best right to the children." But the famine of 1739-41 exceeded in horrors all that went before it; it was a famine of the Middle Ages with the Black Death in its train. The winter of 1739 was one of intense frost; the potato failed all over the country, the price of corn and bread rose far beyond the means of the poor. The land was suddenly smitten with appalling distress; the peasantry laid down in their wretched hovels to die; the humbler classes in the towns to a great extent perished. Hideous disease followed in the track of famine; thousands were swept away by fevers and other complaints; the old and the young especially swelled the tale of the victims. No preparation had been made to arrest the catastrophe; there was no system of relief of the poor, as there has

long been in England, no charity of the State as there is in France; the results in a country always on the verge of want, in which there was little trade and hardly any wealth, were such as had not been seen for centuries in the civilised world. Something was done to mitigate starvation by making roads, bridges and other works at the charge of the Government; and I am bound to state that the Protestant upper classes contributed what they could to save our Catholic people from death. Conspicuous among the best of this order of men was Dr Berkeley, a Protestant bishop; he was a philosopher of extraordinary parts; he had done much to improve the husbandry of our land, and was eminent for his wisdom and enlightened views; he was the truest friend of our afflicted race in his diocese, and justly gained their gratitude and love. All these efforts, however, to avert the terrible disasters of this time were, comparatively speaking, of little avail: the misery of France in 1708 was as nothing to the misery of Ireland in 1740; thousands of the destitute poor sank into the state thus described by the Saxon poet, Spenser:—"Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eat the dead carrions, happy when they could find them." One instance of Protestant ascendency, even at this time, I cannot pass over—the Colonial Parliament voted no monies to lessen the effects of the famine; but it passed a law to make the enforcing of rent more easy.[1]

It flashed across my mind as I beheld these woes

[1] My kinsman's account of the famine of 1739-41 is not the least exaggerated. *See* the evidence collected in Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, II., pp. 218-219, and especially Berkeley's Letters in *Fraser's Life*, I., p. 265. The state of Ireland in the great famine of 1845-47, if not as terrible, was appalling.—EDITOR.

how awful such a visitation of God would be should the population of Ireland largely increase in numbers. I shall never see the dear land again, nor yet the few remaining kinsmen of our race. I have reached my seventy-eighth year and bring to a close these records of a life of many and strange vicissitudes. There is much in the state of my adopted country I regard with misgivings. France is no longer the France of the great king; but I have hopes for the future of the noble land which has caught to its heart the Irish exiles and has placed them high on the roll of her renowned armies. I look at the sword I wore at Blenheim and Dénain; my aged hands will never wield it again, but my descendants, I trust, will draw it, should the occasion arise, in the service of the nation which has given us the Brigade, and, whether in good or in evil fortune, will prove themselves worthy of their people and their name. To France I owe all that makes life most prized—a wife, who has been the best of helpmeets, sons, daughters, friends, companions, home; I love her as if she were a second mother. Yet my thoughts often turn to our fallen Offaly, to the scenes of my boyhood and first youth, to the castle by the lake, to our broken clansmen, to the parents of two generations who nursed me on their knees, to Father Nicholas and our persecuted but revered priesthood. What will be the fortunes of the sons of the brother of my race, who has regained a fragment of the domains of our princes, but has forsaken the Holy Church of his fathers and has linked himself with a settlement of conquest and wrong, which my conscience assures me will not be lasting? Will they, too, in a future age be driven from their homes on some false pretence, by the selfish policy of English rulers? will they have the fate of the Barons of the Pale and the old Englishry, and form, with hundreds of their fellows, another

race of exiles? But it is time for one whose years have passed beyond the space of the ordinary life of man to leave the things of earth and to think only of the things of heaven; in the words of the sacred writings Father Nicholas used to read, may I say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

THE END

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